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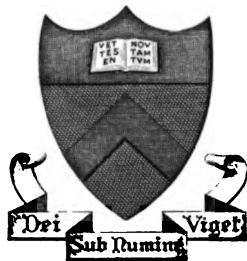


NORKOMA



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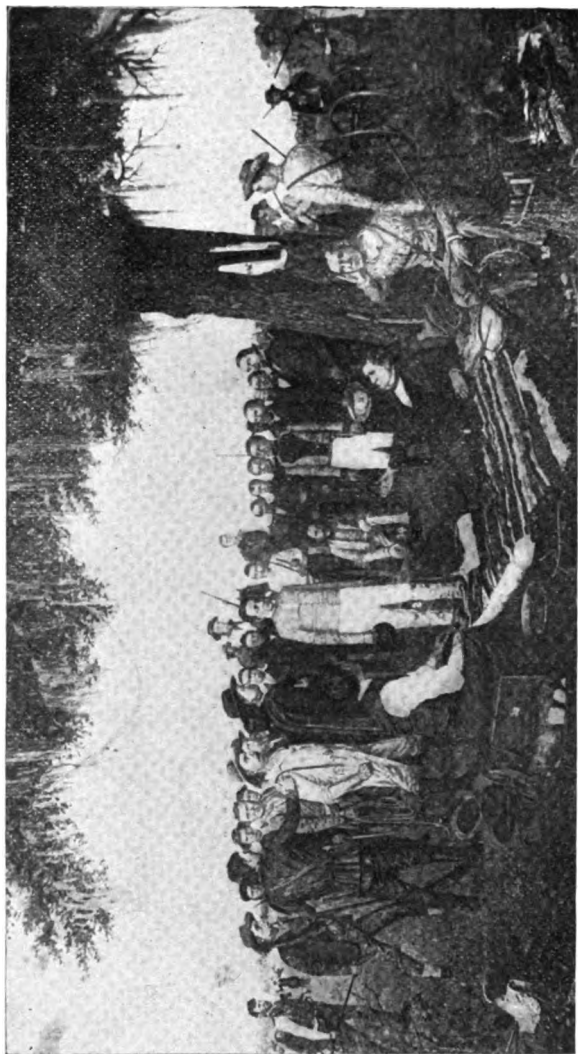
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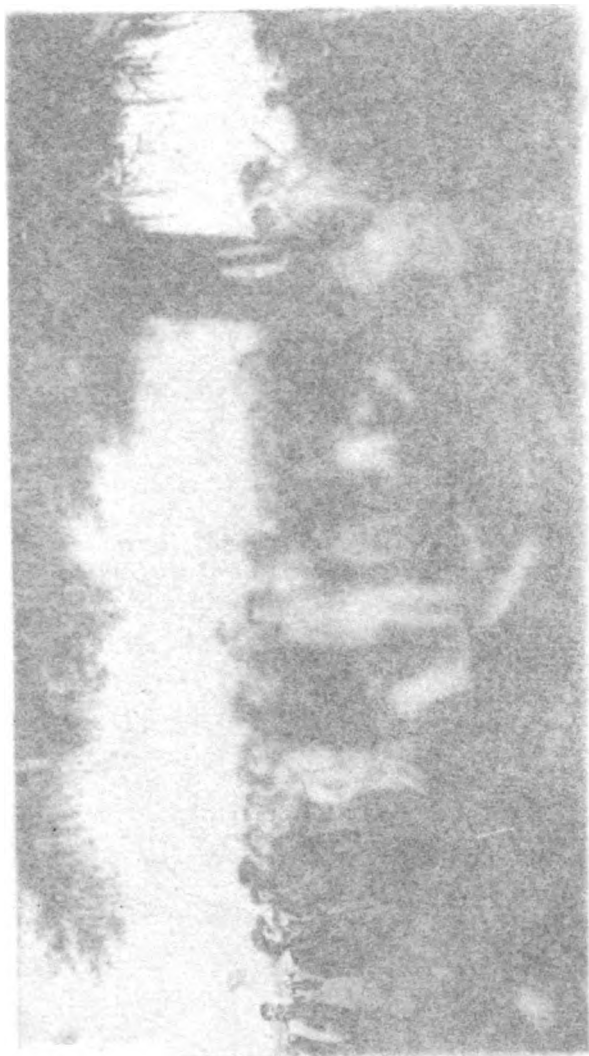
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THE BIRTH PLACE OF TEXAS—(CAPTURE OF SANTA ANNA.)

DATA



NORKOMA

A NOVEL

BY

GEORGE B. GRIGGS

STATE SENATOR



HOUSTON, TEXAS.

J. V. DEALY COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

1906.

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Published March, 1906.

TO MY FRIEND

*Robert T. Daniel of Griffin, Georgia,
the silver-tongued orator of the South
—who is as gentle as a woman; as
noble as a lord; as loving as a brother;
charitable toward human frailties; loyal
to friend; generous, patriotic, true—do
I dedicate this my poor effort.*

The Author.

Houston, Texas, March 15th, 1906.

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NORKOMA

NORKOMA

CHAPTER I.

"LITTLE NORKOMA."

"What yo' speck yo' is gwine ter be good fo', 'Koma, when yo' is done grewed to be a big man?"

"I don't know, mam—"

"Now, doan call me dat. I'se Aunt Dinah, an' I haint bin nothin' else sens long befo' de wah. 'Cose, I aint yo' Aunt, an' I don speck yo's got an Aunt—but its a fack, jes as sho's yo' is bawn, yo's done got some relashuns of some kind what is—what is somebody."

"Have I, Aunt Dinah—and will my mamma come for me?"

"Fo' de Lawd sakes, chile! What will yo' be axin next? I doan speck yo's got a mammy, nor a pappy nuther. Yo' clar right out o' heah now—go 'long and larn to sell dem papahs, 'case yo' knows dis ole niggah caint spote yo' widout yo' larn to do somethin' to help along."

With the delivery of this command, "Aunt Dinah" entered the little cabin she was wont to call her home, her spacious body sorely taxing the doorway as she passed through, leaving little Norkoma standing on the curbstone, a few stray

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copies of daily papers grasped tightly 'neath his arm. His childish face, surrounded by a bright cloud of tangled curls from under which peeped deep, intelligent eyes of blue, wore a look of perplexity, as if the weight of a first great trouble was being felt. After a few moments' hesitation the little lad of but five years was calling his papers and endeavoring in the usual newsboy fashion to dispose of them, the experience to be gained from the effort being by far the greater consideration.

"Evening papers here, sir; papers,—evening papers," he called in his childish voice as he ran along, wistfully extending a paper to the passerby and greeting each with a beseeching look that meant far more than he was able to convey in words. Success did not crown the child's efforts, heroic as they were, to dispose of his supply of papers, and the drooping eyelids and quivering lips told plainly the disappointment that he keenly felt. But the memory of "Aunt Dinah's" stern command lingered with him, and after a few moments' hesitation he again started slowly up the street, calling his papers even louder than before.

"Evening paper, sir?" he queried, and in his childish way scrutinized the faces of those he met, as if among them he hoped to find a friend—someone who would share with him the burden which was rapidly becoming too heavy to be longer borne alone—and mechanically held out a paper as an inducement to a chance purchaser.

"Papers, evening papers," he called, as the pent-up tears forced their way through the barriers which until now had stubbornly held them in check.

"Why, hello, little fellow. Aren't you rather youthful

"LITTLE NORKOMA"

to be in the news business? And how about your papers — not all sold yet, eh?"

The kindly voice of the stranger, a tall, handsome young man, of pleasant appearance and irresistible manner, instantly gained the confidence of the child.

"Oh, please buy a paper, mister!" begged the lad, manfully choking down the sobs that threatened to drown his words.

"Certainly I'll buy a paper—I'll buy all the papers you have. Here's your money, and you may keep the papers. Now, tell me, won't you, where you live?"

"In that little house down there," answered the child, pointing toward a diminutive dwelling situated in the next block. "Aunt Dinah and me, we live there."

"And who is Aunt Dinah?"

"I don't know, sir, who she is, but I live with her."

"Have you no home but the one with Aunt Dinah — have you no father nor mother?"

"I don't know, sir, but I think papa and mamma are dead. Aunt Dinah says I have no papa nor mamma."

"What is your name?"

"Aunt Dinah calls me Norkoma."

This brief conversation was sufficient to convince the stranger that Norkoma was exceptionally bright and intelligent, and he thought of the success the boy might achieve as he grew from boyhood to manhood, should Dame Fortune but firmly retain the hold of him that she undoubtedly had during the early days and months of his existence. He thought, too, of his own childless home, of the infinite pleasure it would be to watch the growth and development of a child like Norkoma; he wished the boy were

NORKOMA

his own. From appearances it was evident that the little fellow received scant care; and he thought of what he would be able to do for him—how he would educate him and prepare him to successfully fight life's battles. He found himself combating every argument "Aunt Dinah" might make against his taking Norkoma, and calculating as to the time it would take to prepare him for the journey to his Southern home.

During this reverie, Norkoma stood gazing wistfully into the stranger's face as if he partly understood what was passing through his mind. The man gazed into the frank, open eyes of the boy, and asked:

"Would you like to go with me, Norkoma, and live in a nice, big house, with a great, green lawn where you could run and play, and have nice clothes to wear and plenty of good things to eat?"

"Yes, sir; but Aunt Dinah wouldn't let me go with you; I am sure she wouldn't, because she wants me to sell papers and earn money for her."

"I think she will let you go. Anyway, we will ask her," and they passed down the street to where "Aunt Dinah" lived. It took but a short, secret conference to make the necessary arrangements with Aunt Dinah, and a few moments later the stranger and the little boy were in one of the largest stores in the city. It required but a brief while to transform this street urchin into a handsome, well groomed lad. During the exchange of clothing, the stranger noticed a fine gold chain about the child's neck, from which was suspended a gold locket containing the miniature of a young and beautiful woman, together with a lock of hair. Upon the locket was engraved the word "Norma."

"LITTLE NORKOMA"

The Limited Express south, that night, dashed with lightning speed through ravines, tunnels and gorges, over culverts, bridges and broad prairies. The iron horse that pulled it, shrieked and panted like a fiery demon, spitting forth great clouds of sparks that gyrated through the dense blackness of the night like so many fireflies. There was a vivid flash of lightning, a deafening peal of thunder, a sudden burst of rain and hail against the windows and upon the tin-covered coach roof, and a shrill shriek of the locomotive as it pierced the oncoming storm with a power almost inconceivable. The wind, arising to a mighty gale, rolled up great clouds of dust and smoke in the wake of the train, while it rushed on as if anxious to be free from the noise and din it had encountered, and of which it was itself a part.

In one of the Pullman coaches sat a man and a little fair-haired boy. The child crept shyly into the corner of the seat, protecting as best he could his eyes and ears from the scene and noise about him. Trembling as if chilled by the cold rain outside, at every peal of thunder, at every shriek of the locomotive, the little fellow crept closer, if possible, into the corner of the seat, but neither did he cry nor utter a word of fear.

"Don't be afraid, Norkoma, I will take good care of you," said the man in kind, soft tones calculated to inspire confidence and affection, constantly assuring the child of his love, care and protecting hand, until the storm and noise soon lost their terror, and sweet sleep breathed her anaesthetic breath upon him, bringing rest and repose as soothing as a mother's loving kiss.

The stranger leaned tenderly over the sleeping child and

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arranged him comfortably in the seat. To him there was something pathetic in the faith which the homeless boy had shown by his readiness to leave "Aunt Dinah" and her hovel, the only mother and the only home he knew. The lights burned low, and all was still save the constant rumbling of the swiftly moving train, and the "click-click, click-click" of the rear trucks as they passed over the joints in the track.

The train thundered on with seldom a stop. The first streaks of the early dawn streamed in through the coach windows, announcing the approach of day. The tops of the tall pines waved in the early breeze as if bowing their thanks to the god of light. The feathered songsters, aroused from their morning nap by the passing train, spread out their little wings, chirped, then flitted gayly to another branch. The cattle in the barn yards slowly roused themselves, stretched their limbs and moored pathetically to one another. The cheery milk-maid, in checked apron and sun-bonnet, with her sleeves rolled high, and a bucket upon her arm, could be heard singing as she tripped lightly along the path to the pasture. The pale smoke, slowly curling up from the kitchen chimneys, told of the preparation of the morning meal. Daylight had at last come; all nature was awake. The train reached the long trestle over Lake Pontchartrain and the mad rush was now moderated as it crept along the bridge that spans this great southern body of water.

The clouds of black smoke, ascending into the air from the smokestack of the locomotive, cast fanciful shadows upon the crystal surface of the waters below. At intervals, schools of porpoise were seen frolicking in the placid waters, as if in welcome of the new day. The great golden orb of

"LITTLE NORKOMA"

light slowly lifted itself above the eastern line where lake and sky seemed to meet, imparting its half transcript upon the bosom of the transparent plane. The broad, peaceful waves seemed like great sheets of silver spreading out to meet the welcome beams of the king of day. The gilded domes of the city in the distance, glittering under the sun's bright rays, were like so many mountains of gold bestudding the far-off southern sky, while the tall church steeples and spires were as index fingers pointing the weary traveler to a haven of rest.

The lake crossed, the quiet, peaceful scene changes like magic as the train speeds along through the suburbs of the city. There are stops for crossings, the passing of suburban trains, the shrill whistle of locomotives, the hurrying of passengers, the cry of newsboys, the rumbling of carts upon the cobbled streets, the rasping release of the airbrakes, the deafening din of the breakfast gong, the trainmen's shrill cry of "New Orleans," and the passengers of the Southern Limited Express are soon engulfed in the busy throngs of the great Southern City.

NORKOMA

CHAPTER II.

"THE CEDARS."

"The Cedars" is one of the handsomest old homesteads in the city of New Orleans, if not, indeed, in the whole south-land. Not that its original cost was so great, nor because it is so unique in design as compared with modern ideas of architecture, but because nature has endowed it with a magnificent beauty that the skill of the architect and artisan cannot approach. If one were to attempt to describe this old homestead with a view of portraying its beauty, he would stop and ponder over the many things that go to make up the whole, then begin again, and again stop and ponder, and so on indefinitely, or at least until he must needs give up in despair.

A slight conception may be had of its character and appearance as viewed from the broad, well paved avenue running along the front. The place consists of an entire block of ground and is surrounded by, or fringed with a double row of tall, healthy cedar trees. On three sides, leading up from beautifully paved streets toward a central amphitheatre-like plot where stands the building, are walks and drives, which are also bordered with cedar and fir trees that rear their tall heads far toward the sunny skies. The spaces between the walks and drives are filled with shrubbery,

"THE CEDARS"

flowers, pools and sparkling fountains, with here and there a cozy nook or rustic glen, where lovers oft are wont to steal and for the while the world forget, and by the world to be forgotten.

Rising out of the center of this plot of shrubbery and blooming flowers is the palatial residence, overlooking the placid water of Lake Pontchartrain. Supported by huge, white marble columns, are broad galleries surrounding the building, upon which open numerous large French windows, leading from the various rooms, making a most inviting retreat for the enjoyment of the balmy breezes of both lake and gulf.

"The Cedars" was the home of LeBerte Marchand and his young and beautiful wife at the time of the occurrence of the incidents narrated in the foregoing chapter. This beautiful home came to LeBerte Marchand by inheritance, from his father, LeRoy Marchand, who for many years before the civil war was a wealthy planter. Like many of his fellow countrymen, however, the greater portion of his vast wealth was consumed by the ravages of the cruel conflict between the states. The war also undermined his physical vigor and energy, which condition soon invited disease and hurried him to his grave. His depleted estate, consisting chiefly of "The Cedars," therefore, fell to his only son and heir, LeBerte Marchand.

Fortunately, the new owner, a lawyer by profession, was possessed of a splendid law practice at the time of the father's death, and was not only able financially to retain this magnificent property, but with the small fortune that came by his marriage, he was also able to re-establish and maintain its old time hospitable reputation.

NORKOMA

Not a few were they who were pleased to boast of having shared the lavish hospitality of "The Cedars" in times gone by, nor indeed were these all of the common herd. Report has it that "The Cedars" was the very center of Southern hospitality, having frequently entertained some of the world's best known diplomats, as well as many foreign and domestic celebrities.

Since it had come into the possession of the new owner, "The Cedars" gradually assumed a different, although, perhaps, not a more pleasing appearance than that which had marked it during its former period of prosperity. The old and roughly fashioned stone posts which supported a low picket fence that surrounded the grounds are replaced by those of a neat iron design, while the wooden pickets have given way to a fancy net-work of iron and steel. The gravelled walks and drives were beautiful in former days, but the smooth asphalt has rendered them even more beautiful. In fact, the shrubbery, flowers, fountains, rustics and buildings—all have felt the artist's skillful touch, giving the appearance of new life, new blood and new vigor, and in its new attire, under the management of the new master and his estimable wife, "The Cedars" again makes its debut before the *societe elite* of the Crescent City, regaining all the popularity of its former days.

During the first three years of their married life LeBerte Marchand and his devoted wife lived in this veritable paradise, always planning, always adding something to make their home more and more enchanting. In the happy, careless moments of those three years devoted to beautifying their home and arranging for the momentary pleasure of their friends and the constant train of guests, they found

"THE CEDARS"

no time to trespass upon the future—upon the years to come—when gay youth has been mellowed by the possible pangs of pain, or ripened into a blessed companionship that forgets the gaudy toys of childhood days, encouraging more sober thoughts and maturer ideas concerning the objects of life.

The continual strain upon the constitution of those who court the goddess of society is sufficient to demand a halt in the social career of many who were far stronger than was Mrs. Marchand, and that period had now been reached in the social life of the mistress of "The Cedars." It brought with it the opportunity for more sober reflections upon the things that are not the vanities of life.

So it was that husband and wife found themselves, as they sat upon the east gallery watching the silver rays of the clear full moon playing upon the crystal waters of a sparkling fountain near by. They had been conversing upon matters more seriously than had been their custom in the past, when the husband said:

"Helen, dear, do you realize that we have devoted three of the best years of our lives to the beautifying of our home and to the pleasure and entertainment of our friends? But at times I cannot get rid of the feeling that the home is still incomplete—that there is something lacking to give us the happiness we have both been seeking."

"Yes," answered the wife, "the home is incomplete, but, indeed, Berte, I do not know the cause. We have books, music, paintings, beautiful surroundings, in fact everything to make it complete, yet I must confess that I share the feeling with you that there is something lacking, although I am at a loss to know what it is. Do you know?"

NORKOMA

"Yes, I think I do, but I may be mistaken. It may be restlessness on my part, a desire to carry still farther my efforts to beautify 'The Cedars.'"

"If I but knew what it is that our home lacks, I would not let another day pass without making an effort to obtain it," answered the wife.

Her simple purity of mind, her eagerness to please those whom she loved were characteristics well known to her husband, but upon this occasion it seemed to him there was something deeper in her bosom not meant to be wholly divulged. There was, however, a sympathetic chord struck, the music of which they had never before jointly heard. It was music rare and sweet, and they sat in silence and meditation like those who for the first time are enjoying "love's young dream" until they were aroused by the great clock in the hall striking the midnight hour. In silence, husband and wife arose, and interlocked in each other's arms, entered their rooms through the great French windows. It can only be conjectured that the wife later succeeded in obtaining a knowledge of her husband's unexpressed thoughts upon the question of the one needed thing in their household.

About a week after the incident just narrated, Mr. Marchand, upon his return home from a distant city, where he had been upon important legal business, brought back with him a great surprise for the mistress of "The Cedars." Returning by an early train he arrived at "The Cedars" before it had taken on its usual activity and animation. The morning was a perfect one—clear, bright, cool and invigorating. The early sun had just peeped over the neighboring rooftops and sifted its golden light through the foliage of the trees, casting yellow spots upon the velvety green lawn. The

"THE CEDARS"

birds sang their gleeful songs and chirped in the boughs and branches of the great cedars. The faithful old watch dog came slowly down one of the walks, wagging his tail in friendly fashion, as the iron gates flew open to admit the carriage conveying the welcome traveler. The old colored servant stood in the doorway to welcome home the master of "The Cedars," to whom she addressed the following:

"De missus is not done got up as yit, but I specks she will not be long 'bout makin' her 'pearance now dat de marse has done come."

"Well, go tell your mistress, auntie, that two gentlemen have arrived and are awaiting her presence in the morning room. Then make haste with the breakfast, for we are as hungry as wolves, aren't we Norkoma?"

"Yes, sah; yes, sah, Marse Berte, yo' old auntie will 'tend to dat dis blessed minute," answered the servant, eyeing the boy as she bowed and shambled out of the room in obedience to her master's command.

The two gentlemen had not long to wait, for in a few moments Mrs. Marchand appeared, robed in a dainty silk morning gown, tripped lightly across the room to her husband, with open arms and upturned lips she extended such a greeting and welcome as only true love and devoted affection can give.

"Now, Helen, dear, let me introduce you to the other gentleman—little Norkoma, our own Norkoma, our son. Norkoma, this is your mamma; won't you kiss her?" said the husband. Mrs. Marchand stood at first amazed, then quickly comprehending the truth, she turned and caught the words of the child as they fell from his innocent lips:

"Oh, yes, sir; I love my mamma," and he held out his

NORKOMA

dimpled little hands and raised his bright face toward Mrs. Marchand as she caught him in her arms and pressed him close to her bosom.

"Oh, what a sweet child, our little boy, our Norkoma," she cried, as she held the child's face near her own and rained showers of kisses upon his lips, his bright blue eyes and his golden hair. The husband turned hastily and brushed away a tear that had forced itself upon his cheek.

LeBerte Marchand was at heart a good man—a good man in all the daily walks of life. This scene was one he had witnessed all the night and all the morning in his mind's eye, and it filled his heart to overflowing. The happy look, the tears of joy that trickled down o'er her cheeks told him more plainly than words could possibly have expressed the happiness that he had brought to the heart of his wife that morning. It was more than he could well bear, and, after several attempts to speak, he quickly left the room, saying in his heart: "God bless my dear wife—God bless them both."

After calming himself, Mr. Marchand instructed the servant to prepare Norkoma for breakfast, which was accordingly done, although Mrs. Marchand seemed loth to give up possession of the child for even so short a time. As the servant returned and announced that breakfast was waiting, the husband, in a kind and sympathetic voice, asked:

"My darling wife, can you now guess what it was our home lacked to make it perfect?"

"Yes," was the soft, sweet answer, and quickly throwing her arms about her husband's neck, and looking into his face with a pair of the happiest, brightest eyes, Helen said:

"Yes, my dear husband, our home lacked a child."

THE GOLDEN LOCKET

CHAPTER III.

THE GOLDEN LOCKET.

Happy had been the three years just passed to the mistress of "The Cedars," but not to be compared with the happiness that now filled her heart, her soul, her very being, since Norkoma had been in their home. Late hours in social circles had been abandoned, and early morning hours—hours that bring vigor, and paint roses upon the cheeks—had been instituted. Daily walks and drives in the fresh autumn air, with Norkoma for a companion, proved not only extremely pleasant, but health-giving and beneficial as well.

The husband, engaged with his numerous clients and their "important cases," never allowed his business affairs to so engross his attention as to estrange him from his happy fireside and the tender, loving ties of home. Indeed, he seemed to feel a renewed interest in his business as well as in his home. Oft-times he would undoubtedly have been found guilty of midday dreams—dreams in which he saw in the future, a gentle, refined young man aspiring to the profession of law, and probably arranging for a co-partnership in his own law office. How natural it is for the affectionate parent to picture in the mind's eye the hoped-for successes of his child in life's uneven journey. It matters not in what station in life born, possibilities of energetic

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American boys and girls are unbounded. They cannot be circumscribed nor limited in their attainments to honor, distinction, popular favor, or the acquisition of vast wealth and worldly riches.

The day dreams and mental visions of doting parents are no less restricted, therefore, in the richness and colorings of those dreams than are the possibilities themselves. It was but natural that LeBerte Marchand should occasionally map out, mentally, the possible future course of his new-found charge, and to paint the pictures thus drawn in the brightest colors. But those dreams were sometimes disturbed by the more sober reflections that the natural parents of Norkoma might, sooner or later, appear to claim the custody and right of possession.

Such reflections had disturbed his mind but a few times when he began devising ways and means to avoid the possibility of such an event, nor was there any unnecessary delay in taking the steps deemed proper in the premises. Therefore, a few days after the arrival of Norkoma at "The Cedars," and before that fact had become known to many people of the neighborhood, in discussing the matter with his wife, Mr. Marchand said:

"I am not altogether certain that I was right in taking the child as I did. Some people might care to contort the act into one of abduction or kidnapping."

"Oh, Bertie, how can you suggest such a thing? Of course, you did right in taking the child. The little fellow was without a home, or the care of a father or mother. Besides, I love him—O I cannot tell you how much."

"Of course, the last named consideration would be sufficient warrant for me to take a whole regiment of home-



THE LITTLE GOLDEN LOCKET.

THE GOLDEN LOCKET

less boys, but I am afraid, my dear, the court would not consider it a sufficiently strong reason for refusing the natural parents the guardianship, custody and possession of Norkoma, if the court should be called upon to decide the matter, and—”

“Oh, but I think it would go a long way in that direction, for a mother who does not love and protect her child is not a proper person to have its custody and care. Besides, we are able to provide him a good home, to rear, protect and educate him, and give him such advantages as will make him a more useful member of society in general.”

“Hello, my little wife, who taught you so much about the working of the law? I propose right now to take you into partnership with me, and—”

“Oh, you forget that you married a lawyer’s daughter,” cheerfully interrupted the wife. “I know, dear ’Berte, that the parent is the natural guardian of a child, and, all things being equal, that the parent has the preference in law to that right, but the state and the public also have an interest in seeing that children shall have such safeguards thrown around them as will conduce to their best interests, and such as will make them more useful to the state and to the public.”

“But how can we say that we are better able than his natural parents to give Norkoma those advantages?”

“Certainly we should never have allowed the child to be found an outcast in the streets of a large city, and under such circumstances as you found him. These facts are evidence of either the parents’ inability to properly care for him, or their lack of affection for their offspring.”

“But, my dear, suppose the child had been stolen from his

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parents and held for ransom. Perhaps you had not thought of that."

"True, I had not. Were that the case, however, the newspapers of the country would have been filled with sensational reports of 'A Stolen Child,' and many people would have heard of it. Besides, there seems to have been no attempt at secreting the boy from the public, or keeping his identity hidden, for the little golden locket containing the miniature photograph, evidently that of his mother, would have readily led to his identity."

"By the way," interrupted the husband, having led the conversation up to this point intentionally, "speaking of the little locket and the picture—the thought has occurred to me several times that with the memento always present to remind him of other days, will the little fellow not be likely to propound some perplexing questions regarding it?"

"Yes, it would be but natural, according to the law of association of ideas, that the ever-present memento should result in bringing about that unpleasant state of affairs. It was but yesterday that the same thought occurred to me and I resolved to remove the little locket when a good opportunity presented, but when I made the attempt my heart failed me.

"Norkoma was sleeping at the time," continued the wife. "We had been out in the grounds for an airing, the child giving himself up to a vigorous romp, and when we returned, he was much fatigued. Taking him in my arms, I hummed over an old nursery tune, and he was soon asleep. He lay in my arms, the picture of sweetness, innocence and purity. Oh, how I loved the little fellow—mother never loved her own son more. I must have fallen into a 'day dream,' for I saw him growing into young manhood, the

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noblest, brightest, best in all the world. Presently I was aroused by a servant passing through the room. My arms had grown tired and I laid him upon the couch, drawing up a chair that I might be near him and continue to feast my eyes on his innocent face.

"Again I found myself drifting into dreamland, and I did not try to prevent it. The picture of the child returned. Again I saw him growing into young manhood as before. How proud I felt, for I was his mother and he loved me as such. One day he came to me in great haste; his face was flushed, and he appeared greatly agitated. I was miserable and felt that some great calamity or misfortune was about to break upon me. In his hand Norkoma held that golden chain and locket. When I saw him my heart sank within me and my blood chilled, for I then seemed to realize that they were connected in some manner with the pending disaster. I was to lose my baby, my darling boy, my beautiful son. The door stood slightly ajar and uninvited there swept into the room a tall, beautiful woman, spiritually serene and calm. She seemed to float across the room until she stood between Norkoma and me, and after a long, lingering look into his face she interlocked her arms in his, then turning to me with a sweet smile she said in a gentle voice but the one word, 'NORMA,' and both turning, passed out of the room.

"I remember no more, but at the first returning consciousness my earliest thought was for my child. He was brought to me, and the knowledge that I had not lost him at once soothed me, and a turn in the fresh air revived me and drove away the overwhelming ennui that had seemed to almost crush my life from me but a few moments before. I felt

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aroused—a blazing fire seemed to burn within me. I felt indignant at the specter form that had seemed to sweep majestically through my room and lead away my son. Although I knew it was but a fancy, a sort of ‘day dream,’ I could not free myself from the vision of the locket. To me it was the connecting link between the dream visitor and Norkoma.

“I resolved to destroy the locket upon the first opportunity. The opportunity came today as the child again lay sleeping. I could resist no longer for I feared the phantom might return in reality, and finding the proofs take my baby from me. I knelt quietly beside the couch where he was sleeping and reached out to unclasp the locket from its fastenings. My fingers grew cold and numb, and a doubt crossed my mind. I prayed that God would give me light and guidance, but my prayers seemed to fall from my lips to the floor, cold and cruel. I tried to harden my heart and convince myself that I was doing right. Selfishness sat upon her throne in my heart and ruled with all the pomp of a wicked queen, assuring me that my prayers had been heard and answered. Encouraged by this assurance, I again put out my hands to remove the locket. The child smiled in his sleep, his lips moved and faintly uttered the word ‘mother.’ He raised his little, dimpled hand, and then languidly it fell to his breast and innocently clasped the treasure as if directed by spirit influence. I started from my knees, and a shudder passed over my body. A breath of air swayed the curtain at the window, and I glanced quickly around, half expecting to see the specter form hovering nearby.

“The shadows of evening fell around me. The house cat wandered into the room, as if looking for his playfellow,

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affectionately smoothed himself against my dress and purred softly. The mournful, whining bark of old Tige reached my ears and sent a chill throughout my body. I arose quickly and left the room, half fearful that I should come in contact with the phantom form as I went. I went out in the grounds and was relieved only when I met you upon your return from the city. I could not then, and know I shall never again make another attempt to take my baby's locket from him."

Mr. and Mrs. Marchand sat for some time in silence, the husband mentally reviewing the question as to whether he had brought to "The Cedars" the happiness he had first supposed. He realized that Mrs. Marchand had passed through a mental and physical ordeal not common, and that it must leave a telling trace upon her health. He at last broke the silence by saying:

"I am under the impression that henceforward we should abandon the name Norkoma. The child does not seem averse to the name of Walter, and in fact I believe that is his correct name. Do you approve of the change?"

"Yes, I would be glad to have the name changed, for the experience of this afternoon seems to cling closely to the name, Norkoma."

"Then after today the little golden locket and the name Norkoma shall be things of the past, and in their stead we will have only our own dear son, Walter Marchand."

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CHAPTER IV.

A FIRST GREAT SORROW.

Five years have elapsed since the occurrence of the incidents narrated in the preceding chapter—the happiest years in the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Marchand. Not a shadow, save a few visionary ones, in all those years crossed their paths. Returning health had brought back to the mistress of “The Cedars” a glow to the cheek and a sparkle to the eye akin to her more youthful days. Walter, for by that name only has the son been known during this time, is now a bright, intelligent lad of ten years. Apt in his studies, he outranks his classmates, and is the peer of them all in deportment. In manner always refined, obedient to authority, earnest in his application to his work, he suffers in no way when compared with youths of his age.

To Walter, Mr. and Mrs. Marchand are father and mother—he knows no other—and he is to them their son indeed. Different from many children whose parents are blessed with wealth and abundant means, as well as afflicted with great social position, Walter has not been left entirely to the doleful care of the nursery. He has been more nearly the companion of his mother, who at the same time played the part of preceptor and instructor.

This sort of program had, for some time, been interrupted.

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A little sister had made her appearance at "The Cedars," and no one is more delighted over the presence of the new-comer than is Walter. No one is more tenderly fond of the helpless little thing, as it lay sleeping upon its mother's bosom than the son, and as the months and years go by no one is more considerate of the desires, pleasures and well-being of the child than is the brother.

Walter and Edith grew to be almost constant companions, and as time rolled on an attachment and affection, each for the other, sprang up, that in later years proved to be of greater depth than they had ever thought possible. Walter has nearly completed his high school course, and is anxiously looking forward to his collegiate career. Edith was now in her teens, and, being exceptionally bright, has kept well in the wake of her brother's onward, intellectual march. But the approaching separation, when Walter should enter college, casts a gloom over the young hearts of the brother and sister, and they are often found discussing future arrangements with the apparent wisdom of older people.

But a deeper shadow threatens to cast a gloom over the entire household of "The Cedars." The long winter, which is now budding into spring, has been a severe one, and Mrs. Marchand was the victim of a succession of colds that quickly developed into a malady, the nature of which could not be mistaken.

"Is there no hope, doctor?" asked the husband as he accompanied the physician into an adjoining room, safe from the hearing of the members of the family.

"I am afraid there is but little hope, Mr. Marchand. I wish to be perfectly frank with you in this matter and must say that I see no reason why I should encourage you to

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build hope upon such an insecure foundation. It would only be a castle to be destroyed by the winds of fate, any moment. It grieves me deeply to tell you this, but I believe it is best that I should do so."

Mr. Marchand sank limply upon a chair with an abject look of pain and despair upon his countenance, murmuring to himself, "Oh, God, can it be true?"

"LeBerte," said the doctor, for they had been long-time friends and associates, "this is to be your first great sorrow. Let me counsel you to bear it with fortitude and courage. Through my own experience I know the full meaning of it, and it is one of the greatest sorrows that can possibly come to man. But remember, the great giant oaks of the forest have been made strong and sturdy by the biting frosts, the hail and chilling rains, and by the sweeping winds that almost uprooted them. The strong and noble soul is made so by first passing through the fiery furnace of trial and tribulation, coming out relieved of the dross and impurities. Come, my dear friend, be brave, and God will help you through," and taking him by the arm the doctor led his friend out into the cool, starry night. It was refreshing, indeed, after his long watch in the sick room, and the two men walked and talked for some time. In bidding his friend good night, Mr. Marchand said:

"I thank you, doctor, for your kind and valuable words of advice. I will, as far as is within my power, be guided by them. But our poor, dear children! How will they be able to bear so great a trouble?"

"For a time their grief will be intense," replied the doctor, "but, unlike older persons, they more quickly form new

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associations and adjust themselves to new situations which wear away the keen edge of their sorrow."

This was LeBerte Marchand's first great sorrow, but the shadow fell, fortunately for him, long in advance of the blow itself, thus preparing him, in a measure, to withstand its mighty onslaught. He fully realized that it would require all the courage and fortitude within him to bear up under the burden that was to cast its full weight upon him.

Walter and Edith, not yet realizing the serious condition of their mother, were, as usual, in the library engaged in their studies, when the father entered. The pained expression of countenance, despite heroic efforts to hide his sorrow, was readily discerned by Edith, who at once put aside her books and drawing near to her father affectionately said:

"Now, what is wrong with my dear papa that he looks so sad and weary?" Then resting her face closely against his and softly stroking his hair, she pleaded: "Won't you tell your own little girl what troubles you? If you will tell her, she will do anything she can to drive away the pain and trouble."

"Oh, it is nothing, my dear little daughter—I am not feeling well—that is all. Go back to your books, dear one, for I must go to your mamma," answered the father, and quickly kissing the child, he arose to go. It had cost him all his strength to hide his emotion and keep back the tears that were forcing themselves upon his cheeks. He dared not tarry for he could compose himself no longer. Leaving the door slightly ajar, he passed quickly into the hallway where he waited, why or how long, he did not know.

Always obedient to her father's command, Edith returned to her study, but the picture of her father's pained and

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troubled face remained before her. No longer able to concentrate her thoughts upon the studies, she closed her books with a sigh, and said:

"Brother, what makes papa so sad tonight? I never saw him look so troubled, and it makes me feel so badly I cannot study."

"I don't know, little sister," returned the brother without looking up from his book. But Edith was not to be put off in this fashion, and, going around the table where Walter sat, she placed her hands over the open book in a playful way, with a serious air said:

"You shall not read another word until you answer my question—now there, Mr. Bookworm, do you hear?"

"Certainly I hear," said Walter, "and as I was just finishing I will put aside my books and devote the remainder of the evening to answering all sorts of questions that a naughty little girl I know may please to ask."

"Who is the naughty little girl? Now, tell just who you mean," said Edith, shaking her finger threateningly at her brother as if to command the truth.

"Oh, she is not far away, and I know her well. Could you guess who she is?"

"No, I cannot," answered Edith, with an innocent air, then drawing her chair near to her brother, in a confiding way she continued: "I would like to know what is troubling papa. I know he is awfully worried."

Walter immediately surmised that the mother's condition was, perhaps, more serious than he had theretofore believed, and a deep flush stole over his face as the thought entered his mind. The change in Walter's expression was noticed by Edith, and before he had time to formulate an answer her

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arms were around his neck and tears were streaming down her cheeks.

"That is why they forbade our going into the room this evening," sobbed Edith.

Walter was not the only listener, for the manner of Edith's speech had aroused the father from his reverie, and from his position in the hallway he could not only hear but could see the occupants of the library. In a sort of stupor he remained as if fixed to the spot, while the brother and sister continued:

"Of course, little sister, we know that serious illness, and sometimes death, must be expected, but I trust mamma will soon be well again," said Walter trying to fortify the child against the possibilities he knew existed.

"Oh, Walter, do not talk of death. Mamma is to live and we are all to be happy together again. Without mamma what would our home be, and what would papa do without her?"

The listener in the hallway was nearly overcome upon hearing Edith's words of loving sympathy and affection, yet they brought inspiration, hope and courage, as well as heavings of the breast, sighs and tears.

"Yes, Edith, dear," said Walter, "mamma's death would be a great loss for you and me to bear, but ours would be nothing in comparison with the loss our father would feel. It has been truly said that a man may lose his wealth, position, all he has in the world, but the greatest—the loss that overshadows all combined, is light compared with the loss of his life companion, his friend, his wife. So it is not in our power to even know how to sympathize with father in his great sorrow, if our dear mother is taken from us, but we can

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do a great deal to help and strengthen him in his hour of trouble. We know how to be kind and cheerful so as to drive away his cares and heart-aches, and we can help to lighten his load," continued Walter in a fatherly way.

The silent listener was deeply affected by the words of wisdom, love and affection, and could remain no longer without disclosing his presence, for his own heart-beats seemed so violent as to lead to detection. With tearful eyes he made his way out into the grounds hoping to be again refreshed by the cool night air. Walking back and forth in one of the paths that led down through the shrubbery, brooding upon his sorrow, he at length spoke aloud as if talking to a friend:

"Why should I bow down like a broken reed in a gale while my children courageously talk of being my staff and support? Is it not my place, rather, to help them through the dark valley of sorrow? God helping me, I will be brave and strong, as the doctor advised, even though it kill me to do so."

LeBerte Marchand had done hard battle with his sorrow. It had come to him in the bright, cheerful summer—when the harvest fields of his happy life were yet in their bloom. Its presence was ever upon his soul, a heavy, blighting weight. Always at his side like a ghastly shadow, whispering in his ear the torturing words: "Your wife, your companion, is slowly fading out of life." It made him feel at times as if there were no mercy, no sympathy, no justice in the ways of Providence; but fortunately, unlike many others, he harbored not such feeling in his breast. Fate was cruel to him, it is true, if we are to pass judgment upon the inevitable laws of nature and nature's God. But, on the

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other hand, fate had also been kind to him and his. Had not he and his loving wife enjoyed a long season of supreme happiness, while millions of the less favored had suffered untold misery, misfortune, and even death? What right had LeBerte Marchand to complain of this, his first great sorrow, when his lot was compared with the usual lot of common humanity?

Within a few weeks after it became apparent that the mistress of "The Cedars" could not survive, the fair, handsome face of the husband had grown pale and haggard; the kindly eyes wore a wild, troubled expression; a deep furrow extended across his brow; the buoyancy of his step was gone. Observing the changed condition of his friend, the physician, knowing that Mrs. Marchand's life was nearing its close, said:

"LeBerte, we have always been the best of friends, and I want to talk frankly with you, as a father would talk to a son, regarding the cloud of sorrow that is hovering over you. It is a new experience for you, while I can speak of it as one who knows.

"There are many ways in which men treat a great sorrow, but the majority of them follow one of three courses. One class of sorrowers, and, by the way, they are the weaker ones, resort to drink, thinking to drown their trouble in dissipation and excesses. You, I know, have better judgment than to take that road. Another class withdraw themselves from the world of friends about them, hardening their hearts against all love and sympathy, become cynical, lose interest in themselves and all around them, growing colder day by day, until finally they disbelieve in the mercy and goodness of God himself, and are virtually nonentities in

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the end. You have too good a heart and too deep a nature to take that road. The other class are those who look kindly, calmly upon their misfortunes and sorrows, taking them as a sort of life discipline, bearing up under them with a courage that is exemplary and praiseworthy. These are the noble, generous, sympathetic souls that you will always find plodding along life's highway, extending a helping hand here, speaking a word of encouragement and cheer there, to help the weary along. They are God's own beacon lights that shine upon the rough, uneven pathway of life, making it possible for many struggling, fainting, weary souls to reach a haven of rest.

"Our sorrows, my dear friend, should make us nobler, better and purer, and they will if we but accept them from God's hand as the lessons of life. They will prepare and qualify us for that enjoyment of the pure, the good, the royal things of this life that others cannot enjoy. They will bring us to that altitude in life's journey where we may look down the decline and over the valley covered with fields of the richest, ripest harvest that mortal eyes can behold. To which class do you belong?"

Before Mr. Marchand had time to formulate an answer, they were summoned to the sick room. The end was indeed drawing nigh, and ere another day had dawned upon "The Cedars" the soul of the affectionate wife and loving mother had taken its flight to the spirit land.

A LONELY MAN

CHAPTER IV.

A LONELY MAN.

It was all over. The family vault in the cemetery was closed and sealed. The wide halls and spacious rooms at "The Cedars" resounded no more with the happy voices of love and the music of cheerful companionship. The family was gone, and the dear old home was in the hands of servants. The members of the once happy family could not bear the idea of remaining at "The Cedars" after the wife and mother had left them, so it was decided that the father, son and daughter should spend some months traveling, and after the keen edge of their sorrow had been worn away Walter should enter college, and Edith be placed in a boarding school nearby, that brother and sister might not be wholly separated.

As soon, therefore, as the various arrangements could be perfected, the Marchands bade farewell to "The Cedars" and their immediate friends, and set out upon their journey.

After devoting the summer months to sight seeing at the places of note and importance in European countries, the little family returned to the United States much benefited, feeling that life still had charms for each of them. To Edith and Walter, the journey had been like a panorama of beau-

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tiful sights and scenes, while the activity of travel occupied their attention so they had little time or opportunity to brood over their sorrow. They were not only willing and ready, but really anxious to resume their studies. Mr. Marchand himself began to note that sense of longing, that inexpressible feeling natural to one long separated from the familiar objects of home.

He knew that his return to "The Cedars" without the company of his son and daughter would not be pleasant, nor indeed would it be pleasant to remain at home without their presence there. However, his duty to his children must not be subverted to his own pleasures or whims, so according to prearranged plans, Walter entered upon his collegiate course at W—, while Edith was comfortably situated nearby. After having arranged matters so that brother and sister should not be entirely separated, and having said many good-byes, the father departed for his home to take up the battles of life again—but alone.

Mr. Marchand arrived in the city in the evening. The streets were ablaze with light, and thronged with merry, laughing crowds of people. The pale, full moon but added luster and brilliancy to the scene, as the lone traveler stood upon the curb, undecided which way to turn or where to go. He had a home and friends, and there were many places where he had been accustomed to retreat for pastime and amusement, but he did not feel disposed toward them now. He felt as a stranger in a strange city, although every street, every building and many faces were familiar to him as he stood there in the pale moonlight gazing abstractedly upon the merrymaking throng.

After a short wait he involuntarily started towards the

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Lawyers' Club, unconsciously selecting the side of the street less frequented by the crowds of people. Going a short distance he paused—he had changed his mind, deciding that the club would be but a bore to him. Across the street crowds were hurrying to the theatre. Should he go there to spend the evening? No, he cared nothing for the opera tonight. "The Cedars," his home? No, he would not go home tonight. He thought of numerous places of amusement, and several times started to go to some one of them, always deciding before reaching the place upon some other course. So he wandered disconsolately about his native city, selecting the more secluded streets, his mind swayed with doubt and uncertainty, selfish in his grief and sorrow, vain in his weakness, until tired nature asserted herself. Then the lonely man entered a hotel and retired to his dismal room.

The sun was peeping over the tops of the neighboring houses as LeBerte Marchand walked slowly up one of the paths leading to his home. He remembered the time in years gone by when he had returned in the early morning with little Norkoma. The faithful old watch dog did not now come down the path to meet him as he had done on the former occasion. The old colored servant was not at the door to welcome "de marse" home. The place seemed shrouded in gloom. He entered the parlor, where the housekeeper soon had a comfortable fire blazing in the grate to dispel the dampness from the room. He sat down and gazed vacantly into the fire. Another chair stood on the opposite side of the fireplace—vacant. In the adjoining room, the door of which stood open, the wife, companion and mother had passed her last days. New draperies surrounded the bed and new curtains were at the windows. The toilet articles and bric-

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a-brac that betoken an air of occupancy had all been removed, and despite the plain, rich furnishings, the room had a desolate and deserted look. Brushing away the tears that dimmed his eyes, he uttered a half audible prayer. The closed secretarie stood in its accustomed place near the window. He opened it. In one of the numerous receptacles was a package of old letters neatly tied with a narrow pink ribbon, slightly soiled by frequent handling. On the envelopes he recognized his own handwriting. The letters had been written in the happy days of long ago, and had been safely kept and treasured by her whose presence he missed so sadly on his home-coming. With tear dimmed eyes he left the room, murmuring "God bless her dear memory."

The servant announced breakfast, but was unheard by Mr. Marchand. "Oh, that I could recall the days gone by—happy days—yes, the happiest of my life," murmured he as he sat with bowed head, while memories of the past crowded over him. There was the first home-coming, when the wife, a bride, had turned to him as they entered the spacious old room and said, "This shall be indeed a home to us, LeBerte, if I can make it so." Then there was the second home-coming when little Norkoma had lifted his bright face to theirs and said, "I love my mamma, and my papa, too." Then later the baby Edith had made them happy beyond expression—then came death, and the home had been robbed of its full glory.

The servant again announced that breakfast was waiting. Marchand started from his reverie and passed into the breakfast room. He halted as he approached his accustomed place—the seat opposite was vacant. The repast, though daintily served, was unrelished and almost untouched. The

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large Maltese cat gently stroked its fur and purred about his feet. He shared his breakfast with it, contrary to former custom—but it was hers, she had loved it.

From the house he passed down through the grounds to the stables. Ere he entered, Felix, the old family horse so much driven and petted by Mrs. Marchand, began neighing impatiently and pawing the ground viciously, seeming to know that his master was near at hand. As the door opened and the master entered, the noble animal stretched his shapely neck across the manger, shaking his head and whinnying joyfully, extending the only welcome he knew.

Going around into the stall he patted the horse's neck, while the intelligent animal contented himself with resting his head upon his master's shoulder. The horse soon became restless and neighed several times, throwing his alert ears forward and gazing persistently out of the open door. The sorrowful man did not at first comprehend, but when the reason for the horse's restlessness dawned upon him he burst into a flood of tears, and, throwing his arms about the horse's neck, he sobbed: "Poor Felix! Do you miss her?" Then, passing around into the barn, he threw himself upon a pile of new mown hay, and wept as man seldom weeps.

It was late in the day when LeBerte Marchand emerged from the buildings, for, worn and weary, he had wept himself to sleep. The sleep had not only refreshed him, but it had also revived him both mentally and spiritually, so that he felt altogether like a new man. In time, he learned to look upon his sorrow as a black cloud of destiny and fate which sometimes drops down before the vision of our happiest dreams. In this, his great sorrow, LeBerte Marchand's soul became cleansed of its dross. His patient suffering

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became distilled into a holy incense which arose to drive away the vain expectancies, the unholy hopes, the unhappy fears, that burdened his soul. From it all he emerged with a clear head, a lighter heart. Then, toward the eternal, approaching future, he stretched out his prayerful hands of hope, with a fixed belief that in the great beyond there is something brighter and better.

A FAMILIAR FACE

CHAPTER VI.

A FAMILIAR FACE.

Walter's college days are now over, and he is a full-fledged practitioner of the law in the city of New Orleans. The office sign that adorns the entrance to the office building reads: "Marchand & Marchand, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law."

Edith has not finished her college education. Having added music and fine art to her course of study, she is required to remain a while longer. The loving brother and sister saw little of each other during the last year or two of Walter's college life. So industrious with his books was he, that whatever visiting between them there was, fell to the lot of Edith. As expressed by Walter upon occasions when Edith pleaded with him for a visit to her: "Now, sister, you see I'm a man with great burdens to bear, or at least I expect to bear them when I launch out into the busy world, and I must learn here to economize my time in preparing for the battle. With you girls it is different. Your battles are all fought out in your colleges. When you leave your Alma Mater you go out the victor, with no more battles to fight. You depend upon us men to fight life's battles, and that is why you need not be so anxious about a mere trifle

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of time. Besides, I appreciate your visits to me more than ever I could my visiting you," etc.

However, a regular system of tri-weekly correspondence was kept up between Walter and Edith, thereby keeping in close touch with each other in feeling, sentiment and mutual interest. It had been well agreed upon that at the close of Walter's course he would make up for the seeming inattention by an extended visit with Edith at her college home, and of which contemplated visit both brother and sister lived in glorious anticipation.

Edith's later correspondence became filled with glowing accounts of her wonderful music teacher, whom the pupil appeared to love very dearly. This apparent affection seemed to leave a twang of pain in Walter's bosom, though he could assign no reason therefor. He would, however, readily manufacture excuses satisfactory to his own mind for the time being. Indeed, he was almost wholly engrossed with his college work, affording little time for other matters.

The teacher, according to Edith's description, was almost a divinity. Using the pupil's language, the teacher was: "The most lovely, angelic person I have ever met. She is a woman of quiet, motherly, sympathetic nature, and a charming personality. The word beautiful does not fully express her face, her eyes, her very soul; but what word can I find to use as a substitute? The few gray hairs give the appearance of interwoven strands of silver, decorating her head with a crown triumphant—a victor over the perplexing shadows of life."

No wonder that the brother occasionally felt a strange pang—perhaps of jealousy—at this wonderful affection for the

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teacher. Edith and Walter had always been lovers, as well as brother and sister.

But disappointments come when least expected. The date of the Commencement, Walter was taken sick with symptoms of protracted fever, so it was thought best that he should hasten to his Southern, sunny home, where, after a few weeks of rest and recreation, he became anxious to begin his "battles of life" with the business world, and which he did by entering into partnership with his father in the practice of law.

The miscarriage of the contemplated visit was a great disappointment to Edith, and upon learning of her brother's illness, but a few days elapsed until the family circle—that is, what remained of it—was again complete around the hearth-stone of "The Cedars." It was a glorious reunion. The sharp edge of the former great sorrow had been worn off by the flight of time and the cares of life. The bright and glittering star of hope and of youth's ambition was high in its ascendancy. Mirth, laughter and song again filled the old home—except an aching, gaping void in the bosom of the father, who, however, jealously guarded the secret by his every word and act.

Edith's cheerful nature and matronly care soon mastered her brother's illness. They were constant companions, as in their childhood days. Their mutual love and affection were more than that common between brother and sister, but they were not aware of the fact. It was a pleasure to the father to witness this wonderful love and affection between his children. He loved them as father never loved, so Mr. Marchand thought, and he was in turn equally loved by Walter and Edith.

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But the family reunion must end for a period—Edith is to return to the college. The business cares of the office had engaged Mr. Marchand's whole attention since the time he returned to his desolate home and took up the battle of life, alone. With the exception of a few short visits to Edith and Walter, he had enjoyed no recreation or rest from his daily routine of toil. Now that Walter had blossomed into manhood, and had prepared himself to carry a part of the burden, Mr. Marchand looked forward upon a brighter scene. He could now devote more time to the comforts and pleasures of life.

Therefore, leaving Walter in charge of the office, with certain plain, but simple instructions, Mr. Marchand, with a lighter heart than he had for a long time enjoyed, accompanied Edith on her return to college. Since the death of Mrs. Marchand, the only beam of joy he had known was in the anticipation of his own Walter and Edith growing into a beautiful man and womanhood that would crown his declining days with satisfaction. But now that his hopes were partly realized, the darker clouds seemed to clear away, and there was promise of a brighter future than he had thought.

No two persons could have been sweeter companions upon that journey than were Edith and her father. Passengers upon the train wondered for a spell if they were lovers, or bride and groom on their honeymoon. And, when they were discovered to be father and daughter, they at once became the envied of all about them. The novelty of visiting class recitations with Edith brought back the old spirit of his college days, and Mr. Marchand grew perceptibly younger day by day. He talked with the teachers and faculty, visited the

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literary societies, and enjoyed the exercises. What a change these associations and surroundings brought about in Mr. Marchand, no one knew better than himself. He found Edith's music teacher even more charming and beautiful than she had been pictured. He felt glad that Edith had found so good and true a friend and associate. As teacher and pupil were almost inseparable after school hours, the father was necessarily made the third one of the party, and this companionship was a pleasure to him.

But the pleasurable visit could not be indefinitely extended. The call to duty by his son's side now began ringing in Mr. Marchand's ears, and he made preparations to leave.

On the evening of his departure, while in the parlor awaiting the preparations of Edith and her teacher, who were to accompany him to the train, Mr. Marchand was mechanically glancing through an album of old photographs. The faces were all strange to him, and elicited little or no interest. As he was about to close the book, by chance his eyes fell upon a photograph that at first attracted, then startled him. It was an old photograph, but the face of the original stood out in clear cut lines. The brows of Marchand became drawn, and he drew his hand across his face as if to brush away a shadow that clouded the memory of the past. Again glancing at the photograph, he exclaimed to himself: "I have seen that face before."

His reverie was broken by the sudden approach of his escorts. The album dropped from his hands and was closed, but the incident was one against which memory would not close. With many happy good-byes and numerous messages for Walter, Mr. Marchand departed for his home with a light heart and buoyant spirits, but with a tinge of pain, or a

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mysterious unforgetfulness of the photograph of a face he somewhere, at some time in the dim past, had seen before, the recollection of which was beclouded and shadowed.

On the sleeper, as the train plunged homeward, when he closed his eyes the photograph continually presented itself before his mental vision, however hard he tried to drive it away and out of his mind. In his half sleeping moments, he would find himself repeating the words, "I have seen that face before."

THE YOUNG LAWYER

CHAPTER VII.

THE YOUNG LAWYER.

When Walter Marchand entered his father's law office as partner in the business, he realized that he was but beginning the study of law; that from Kent, Blackstone and other text writers he had only obtained principles, axioms and maxims. But, here, in the office and in the court, he found the law as it was actually practiced, by "precedent" rather than by the principles laid down by the ancient writers. New and ever changing conditions in the affairs of mankind required modification of many of these ancient principles, and our new lawyer soon learned to adjust them to harmonize with the present conditions. The pleasure of being free, his own master, independent, afforded him a pleasurable sensation he had not before known. His cordial reception by the members of the bar was, indeed, a great satisfaction to the new lawyer, and tended in a great measure to remove the feeling of uncertainty and embarrassment that is usually experienced by the beginner in the practice of the law.

Being a student, an earnest, industrious man, Walter soon found his equilibrium, and readily took high rank among the younger practitioners.

Young Marchand had not practiced law a great length of time when, upon a certain occasion, he was appointed by

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the Criminal Judge to defend a person indicted for theft, but who, by reason of poverty, was unable to procure counsel. After consultation with the defendant, wherein that person had freely and frankly admitted his guilt, Walter returned to the Court and modestly declined to defend the criminal.

"State your reasons for declining to defend this man," roughly demanded the Judge.

"I could not do so, sir, lest I become guilty of a breach of professional confidence," replied the lawyer.

"Then, sir, unless you can assign some good reason for your conduct in this matter, you will stand subject to a fine, and perhaps be disbarred from the practice of the law," returned the Court.

"I appreciate the gravity of this seeming offense against the Court, and I also realize that my lips are sealed against making known the conditions which give rise to my rebellion against defending the accused. I must say, however, that it is a matter of conscientious scruple, a religious and moral principle that must have been born in me at my birth, and grown with my growth, and which, I hope, will cling to me until I die. This dilemma is not of my own making. I am indeed sorry that it has occurred, and without desiring to be insubordinate, I cannot do otherwise than maintain my position though I be fined, or even disbarred from the practice of my chosen profession."

The dignity of the Court had been offended. The Judge had always been a staunch friend of LeBerte Marchand, and had taken a sort of pride in the son upon his admission to the bar. Personal friendship, however, could not be allowed to interfere with the "dignity of the Court." To ad-

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judge a fine or a jail sentence against the young lawyer would, perhaps, break down his high-strung nature and lead to unaccountable results, yet, whatever the result, the authority of the law must be maintained. The Judge turned to the clerk and said:

"The clerk of the Court will enter up a fine of one hundred dollars against Mr. Marchand, and a judgment of commitment to jail. The Sheriff will take charge of the gentleman and keep him in confinement until he purges himself of the offense against the court."

Walter gazed unflinchingly into the eyes of the Court as the judgment was being passed. His face flushed and paled as the thoughts passed through his mind of the great mortification his confinement in jail would bring to his old father and his sister. His heart and soul rebelled against this unjust decree of the Court. Fired with indignation, he appealed to the Court:

"Your honor, I cannot understand how I am guilty of contempt of the Court. The situation is not one of my own making. The Court appointed me to defend an accused person, and to do so without compensation for my services. The defendant could not procure my services in his behalf when he refused to follow my counsel, were he to offer me a fabulous fee. But the Court, by its order, seeks to compel me to do that which no amount of money could hire me to do, and in my refusal, I am to be covered with humiliation and disgrace. What for? To appease the whim of the Court? Shall I lose my own dignity, suppress my conscientious scruples, and outrage myself in my own estimation for the poor privilege of practicing law before the Court? That I can not and will not do, and here and now

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tender my resignation as an officer at this bar, and with this, abandon the practice of law, forever. I will pay the fine assessed against me, and, being no longer a member of this bar, the Court has no right in the law to enter further sentence against me."

"But the sentence was entered before you tendered your resignation," said the Judge.

"But was not executed in whole or in part," returned Walter.

"The sentence of the Court will not be modified, and the Sheriff will take charge of you instantler," roared the Judge.

"And before the Sheriff or any other person confines me in prison upon that order, there will be spilling of human blood," replied Walter as he wheeled and hurried out of the room before the bailiff had an opportunity to lay hands upon him.

As Walter passed out by one door, his father entered by another, and upon inquiry as to the apparent commotion, ascertained all the facts. After a whispered conversation with the Judge of the Court, the fine and jail sentence were both remitted and the young lawyer fully restored to his former standing, as appeared upon the record of the Court.

LeBerte Marchand took up the defense of the accused, whom Walter had refused to represent, and in the course of the day procured a verdict of "not guilty" from a jury, which set the prisoner free.

When the elder Marchand arrived that evening at his office he found Walter in a condition of absolute despair, although he had already learned of the Court's action absolving him from the orders previously entered. He was grieved

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and hurt, because he had been unjustly held up to public criticism, as he thought.

"What reasons had you for not defending the accused?" asked the father, though he well knew in advance the answer.

"The man confessed his guilt to me, as his attorney, and refused to either plead guilty before the Court or to allow me to enter a plea for him. I would not stultify my conscience by defending a man whom I knew to be guilty of the crime with which he is charged. I could not be employed to do so, nor forced so to do by the order of the Court. That is why I refused," answered Walter.

"But," replied the father, "while the man may have been guilty in fact, he was not guilty in law. That is, the State could not establish or prove his guilt."

"If a man be guilty in fact, he is also guilty in law, for his guilt, or crime, lies in violating the law. If self-confessed criminals are to be turned free through the sharp practice of the attorneys appointed by the court, then why make laws? Why not throw open the prison doors and abolish law making and the criminal courts? Ah, father, there is something wrong at the foundation of the system. The lawyer who, knowing his client to be guilty of a crime, defends him and seeks to set him free, is like the hired assassin—he is *particeps criminis*."

"My son," said the father, "you must not overlook the fact that a lawyer's first duty is to his client, the public afterwards."

"No, father," replied Walter, "the lawyer's first duty is to uphold the sovereignty of the law; loyalty to his country and its laws, then his client. A lawyer is but an officer of

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the law, the same as the Judge upon the bench whose counsel and adviser he is. The lawyer who knowingly seeks to set a criminal free at the expense of the laws of the State is worse than the criminal, in my estimation. Others may be employed or appointed who will, but I now serve notice on the bar and the courts, that I shall never defend a person actually guilty of a crime, either under his employment or by the appointment of the Court, except upon one condition, to-wit: That the defendant confess his guilt before the Court and the jury, and plead for mercy."

It is true that the position thus taken by the young lawyer was not altogether in line with that presumed to be taken by the profession. In fact, it was looked upon by the people as an innovation in the practice of the law. The news of the "honest young lawyer" spread over the city with great rapidity. The morning papers came out with large headlines detailing the incident accurately and commenting upon the ability, integrity, honor and moral stamina of the "rising young lawyer."

His friends flocked to his office to congratulate him. Strangers also came to see this wonderful young man who would rather abandon his chosen profession than to defend an actually guilty man—would decay in the prison cell rather than stultify his conscience. Letters came to him from various parts of the State, and even from other States did the young lawyer receive letters of congratulation and encouragement.

At one great bound Walter Marchand came into prominence throughout his city and State. The political machine was not long in recognizing his great popularity. The good people of the city had long prayed in their hearts for an

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honest administrator of the city's affairs. The machine and the people both looked at Walter Marchand with a covetous eye. The machine doubted its ability to control and use the young man to its advantage should he be placed in office. The people doubted their ability to put him into office against the all-powerful machine. They did not doubt the young man's absolute fidelity to every honest cause. The young lawyer had never dreamed of entering the political field. He abhorred politics, at least what little he had seen of the practice of "the game of politics."

Friends of the machine and friends of the people both began courting the good graces of the young man. The young man was not slow in deducing conclusions. He smelled the battle from afar, and looked on with graceful placidity, to the surprise of his friends who would have been glad to jump at the opportunity of procuring official position and distinction. To his father, whom he made his steadfast confidant, he would say:

"I am but a boy; I am not capable of assuming official position, even were I by nature inclined in that direction. My desire is to become a good lawyer, but above all, to be and become a good citizen. I have observed what public office has done for some of our acquaintances. I learn that when they entered public life they were prosperous and honored citizens. Today one of them begged of me a dime to buy a cup of coffee, but he bought poor whiskey instead."

"But," rejoined the father, "all people in public life are not thus affected. Some of them are degenerate, it is true, but I think the majority of them profit by it. My observation has been that many of them have done real well, financially."

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"Perhaps so," answered Walter, "but whence came the finances, the wealth? Did the legal and honest emoluments of the office make them rich, or was it what some people call 'the perquisites'?"

"Oh, well, it might be said that it was both, in some instances," returned the father. "There are many instances where the official position gives one a foreknowledge of events and contingencies that afford an unexcelled opportunity for profitable investment. For instance, a certain street is to be paved, or a certain public improvement is to be made in a certain locality which will greatly enhance the values. That is but one instance—thousands might be mentioned. Certain officials are in the possession of this knowledge and take advantage of it, make it profitable to themselves. The people at large learn of these things when too late."

"I am aware of the many advantages of that character which public life affords, but I am also aware of the many disadvantages it entails. For the present I shall give my attention to my law practice and let the world 'wag along.'"

THE LITTLE MUSIC TEACHER

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LITTLE MUSIC TEACHER.

Edith, in her Northern school home, read the news articles of her brother's sudden bound into popular favor and notoriety, and was delighted beyond expression. She devoted hours, almost daily, writing letters of love and congratulation to her brother and father. Frequently those letters would contain expressions of her music teacher, Mrs. Olcott, regarding the father and brother. True, Mrs. Olcott had never met the brother, but from her long companionship with his sister, she felt that she already loved him as she did Edith. One of the greatest desires of the motherly little teacher was to meet her pupil's brother.

Letters full of prayers and pleading from Edith could not draw the young lawyer away from his duties at the office and the court. He was in love with his profession, and its duties took precedence over all else.

The father and son agreed that Edith should have more attention from them, and that a visit should be made her. The suggestion by the son that the father should be the visitor was not in the least opposed by the elder gentleman. It appeared to Walter that the father was really anxious to visit the Northern school where Edith attended, but it was only a passing thought.

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Edith and Mrs. Olcott were greatly rejoiced when they received word of the father's coming. No man was ever more heartily welcomed than was Mr. Marchand upon his arrival. There was a short vacation of three days, and they were filled with genuine pleasure. It was in beautiful October. The leaves of the trees were shaded with a golden hue, and the chestnut burs were open. The bracing autumn breezes mingled with the welcome sunshine to paint the flush of health upon the cheeks, and to invigorate the body and mind of him who roamed the open fields or tramped the forest, carpeted with new fallen leaves.

Edith, a lovely, lithesome lass, overflowing with joy, mirth and laughter; Mrs. Olcott, beautiful, queenly and lovable; Mr. Marchand, handsome, gentlemanly, and with a nature just ready to burst from a long confinement in sorrow's prison-house, made up a little party ripe and ready to enjoy to the fullest the freedom of the field, farm and wood. To the two elder people of the little party, this outing brought back, with full force, the memories of childhood's happy days. How the images of long ago lingered in memory's picture gallery! All, in the brightest of tints and colors. They again saw the sunshine, the birds and the flowers of their youthful days. In the hard tramp of years they had walked through the shades of forgetfulness, but now the warm sunshine of memory sifted through the clouds of sorrow, bringing back to them the days when hills and valleys were alike pleasant to the joyful tread of cheerful youth—when bumps and rills and gulleys and hills in the path of life ahead are covered as with the soft, white snow that covers the irregular contour of the mountain, peak and valley. Oh, it was a joy, a pleasure supreme to our little trio,

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no one of which drank of the pleasure more eagerly than Mr. Marchand. It was to his mind and spirit as wine to the stomach. No wonder was it that he and his daughter's teacher were frequently observed as unconsciously drawing together under some chestnut tree, gazing into each other's eyes and relating the experience of their youthful days, until they became wholly oblivious to all around them.

Upon such occasions, and with a roguish sparkle in her eye, Edith might have been heard saying to herself, "I think I smell a mouse." Then she would innocently find her attention engaged at something a short distance apart from her companions, so as to allow the situation to grow perplexingly interesting by her sudden reappearance and interruption.

Edith loved the little teacher with her whole heart. From their companionship their lives almost became an open book, each to the other. The warm affection was thoroughly mutual between them. With the coming of spring, Edith would finish her course of study at the school, and would leave for her Southern home. The thought of the separation was equally distressing to both teacher and pupil. Edith did not hesitate to frequently mention the subject in the presence of her father, though she at first did not observe the passing of sympathetic, or perhaps knowing, glances between the two elder persons.

"You are really not jealous of your little teacher, are you, Edith?" asked the father upon one occasion.

"Oh, indeed no, I would only be too glad to have a cause for jealousy," answered Edith, as she coyly slipped her arm around the waist of her companion-teacher.

Mrs. Olcott flushed a little and adroitly turned the con-

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versation to other subjects. True, she was not at heart averse to changing her mode of life, and especially should an opportunity afford, which would permit her to retain the agreeable companionship of her pupil. Mrs. Olcott was as discreet a little woman as she was lovable, and being the soul of honor, she would not make use of any of the little, bewitching wiles, so exclusively the inheritance of the gentler sex, so as to lead Mr. Marchand forward to the consummation of the object which she believed was being formed in his mind. No matter what her feeling may have been, or how much her soul went out toward Mr. Marchand, it must remain a sacred secret within her own bosom. Not even Edith should suspect the truth; nor should she admit the truth to herself. If, when the proper time came, should that time ever come, she would frankly confess the truth and thank God for His goodness to her. So ran her thoughts as she sat one evening at the piano thrumming in a desultory sort of way upon the keyboard, and humming "The Lost Chord."

Edith and her father were out walking, and as they approached the house, the daughter was reminded of the fact that she had promised to call upon a friend. She therefore directed her father to go in the house, saying that she would follow immediately after performing her errand.

Mr. Marchand stepped lightly upon the porch, unheard by the singer within. He stopped and listened as if charmed by the music. The music ceased for a moment, then began again, a beautiful, plaintive melody that rose and fell like the waves of the sea. Then with a sudden change, a fierce storm of melody pealed forth from the piano with such magnificent execution that Mr. Marchand could see before his

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mental vision the charging and retreating forces of an army at battle. The thundering of the cannon, and the roar of the musketry, mingled with the rhythmic strains as they floated out upon the evening air, was plainly perceptible and audible to the listener. Then came the after calm of battle, the patter of the rain, the going into camp, the bugle taps—all with that marvelous and mysterious execution that thrilled the soul of Mr. Marchand, and caused him to almost doubt his senses.

The music ceased, the listener stepped to the door and gazed in upon the wonderful musician who rested her reclining head upon her arms, which were folded across the keyboard of the piano, as if in sorrow or in deep meditation. "Shall I approach and arouse her from her dreams, whatever they may be?" thought Mr. Marchand. He decided not to disturb her. The shades of evening were gathering fast about the scene. In the growing darkness of the room the outline of the wonderful musician could scarcely be discerned. Mr. Marchand retraced his steps to the gate, where he stood and gazed at the starry canopy above, the following beautiful lines of verse running through his mind:

"Music! O how faint, how weak,
Language fades before thy spell!
Why should feeling ever speak
When thou canst breathe her soul so well?
Friendship's balmy words may feign,
Love's are e'en more false than they;
Oh, 'tis only music's strain
Can sweetly soothe and not betray."

—*Moore.*

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How long he stood by the gate, musing or dreaming, Mr. Marchand did not know, or how long he might have continued to contemplate the starry canopy, had he not been interrupted by a passerby, was a problem difficult of solution. Recovering from his reverie, he discovered the room all aglow with light. He again approached the door, and was welcomingly received by the wonderful little musician whose excellent execution had driven him into dreamland a short while before. Naturally, their conversation drifted to the subject of music.

"I cannot refrain from complimenting you very highly upon your rare musical skill," said the gentleman. "It has been my pleasure to listen to the efforts of many professional artists, but permit me to say that I have never heard your equal."

"I am pleased to accept the compliment in the same spirit in which I feel sure it is given, but I fear you are inclined to accept as conclusive the opinion of Edith, whom I know overrates my poor abilities."

"Oh, no," replied Mr. Marchand, for he knew that the musician was totally ignorant of his presence a short while before, and he felt that he had been an eavesdropper. "I will confess that upon approaching the house this evening, I heard you singing, and I stopped to listen. It was beautiful. I would not interrupt you by entering. The song ceased, and, as I was about to approach, the music began again, and again I halted, entranced. I waited, heard it through—one of the most brilliantly executed masterpieces to which I have ever had the pleasure of listening. I really never knew that a piano could be made to produce such wonderful music."

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"Oh, Mr. Marchand, you are either jesting, or you do me an injustice by overestimating my poor abilities," returned Mrs. Olcott.

After further conversation along this line, Mr. Marchand continued:

"Edith tells me you are a native of our beautiful Southland."

"Yes, of dear old Tennessee, though I have not visited my native state in a number of years."

"You frequently visit your folks and friends, I judge?" inquired Marchand.

"My folks are all gone," said the little woman, with a more tender tone, casting her eyes downward. "None of them are living, so far as I am able to learn. My father and brother fell in battle during the war. Father was an enthusiastic Southerner, and of course his fortunes went in support of the cause he believed right."

"Certainly, certainly," interjected Marchand. "But if I do not seem rude, may I inquire what was your father's name?"

"Of course. My father's name was Henry J. Wingate."

"And you are the daughter of Henry Jackson Wingate? Your brother's name was Lee Wingate, and with whom I marched side by side in the same company. Why, God bless you, little woman," said Marchand as he clasped her outstretched hand in both his own, then turned to brush away a tear that trickled down his cheek. After a pause, he continued:

"Lee and I were mere boys, but a braver, truer boy never shouldered a musket than your brother. I was not with him

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when he fell, but I heard of his death. He was a soldier, every inch a soldier."

The two persons now, having crossed the line of cold formality, became close friends through that mystic tie connected with the history of the past, which sometimes has made friends of strangers, and companions of new found friends. Instead of wandering up and down the well beaten path of formality, they loitered along the happy valley of springtide, where rippling waters echo to the music of joyous mirth, and where the warm sunshine of loving friendship brings pleasant scenes of continual summer.

"Poor little exile," thought Marchand, as his eyes, full of sympathy, feasted upon the fair and beautiful creature before him. There ran through his mind Mrs. Osgood's lines, as follows:

"An exile, ill in heart and frame—
A wanderer, weary of the way;
A stranger, without love's sweet claim
On any heart, go where (she) I may!"

There also ran through his mind the thoughts of his home—his almost desolate home, and the necessity of a mistress there, now that Edith was soon to return, an educated and refined young lady. Visions of a queenly matron, a wonderful musician, as gracing the old home, "The Cedars," ran through his mind. What he might have next said to the little woman may only be surmised, but whatever it might have been was forestalled by Edith breaking pell-mell into the room, with a merry, ringing laugh, begging her "dear dad's pardon" for remaining so long, then adding:

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"But I know you were well entertained, papa, for teacher is such splendid company."

"Oh, yes, indeed. We put in the time pleasantly, and had really forgotten—"

"Oho, I caught you, daddy. You really forgot that your little girl was in existence. Very well, the next time I shall be in no very great haste to perform my errands," said Edith, throwing her arms around her father's neck, and showering kisses upon his forehead.

The trio whiled away the happy moments in social chat, interspersed with music, and wondered that time had flown on such rapid wings. All formalities between them had been abandoned, and to an onlooker it would have appeared as a happy little family. Mr. Marchand was to leave for home the next morning by an early train, and after procuring Mrs. Olcott's promise to visit his home with Edith during the Christmas vacation, he bade them good night, and the little music teacher and her pupil were again alone.

Long after Edith had retired for the night the little teacher sat in her room, thinking. She pondered over her whole life. Well did she recall the time when Wilkoma Olcott first came into her young life. She was but eighteen, then. Her mother was dead, and her father and only brother were in the Southern army. Wilkoma Olcott was a handsome, genial fellow, and, to all appearances, he was a gentleman. The two met, fell desperately in love, and were married.

Olcott wore a soldier's uniform, of gray, and tarrying but a short time after the marriage, his services were demanded at the front, so he claimed. Again and again he went away and returned. Finally, a son was born to them. His actions were strange, but his accounts of the war appeared to be

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regular. He went away again as suddenly as he had come. Again he reappeared, and his actions seemed stranger than before. He begged his little wife to go with the child across the lines into the Northern country, pledging her safe passage.

After long and earnest pleading, with full confidence in the man she loved, her consent was given. Taking full instructions as to the manner and mode of travel, she to travel alone, he to bring the child and meet her in Cincinnati, Ohio. From that day forward, she had never seen nor heard of her husband nor her child. What became of them she never knew. For twenty-five years they were as much lost to her as if they had been dead. For aught she knew they were dead. But to know that they were dead would be a blessed relief, which thought now impressed itself upon her mind more than ever before. The thought that this uncertainty might now prove a bar to the prospects of a happy ending to her life of solitude and sorrow was galling, and against which her whole nature revolted. Rising to her feet, she exclaimed:

"Right and justice shall prevail, as God shall be my judge!"

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CHAPTER IX.

THE PROPOSAL.

The Christmas vacation was a royal holiday at the old home, "The Cedars." Whatever had been the former disappointments between Edith and Walter they were not to be repeated upon this occasion. Edith and her teacher had promised Mr. Marchand that the vacation should be passed in the old home. They required him, as a penalty for this pleasure, to come and fetch them home. The task was an exceedingly pleasant one for Mr. Marchand. Indeed, he had looked forward to it for weeks, and was glad when the time came for his journey. It might not appear necessary to state that "The Cedars" had been recently renovated from garret to cellar, but it is a fact, nevertheless. We may not stop to inquire into the veriest cause of this trimming up and the beautifying of the old home. Walter Marchand looked on as the work progressed, but asked not a question of the father who managed the affair. It was the father's house and home, and if the father cared to "put on new fixings," it need not cause the son to become inquisitive.

Walter knew that Edith was coming home for the holidays and that she would have company. It was commendable in the father to "spruce up" for his daughter, who, in Walter's mind, was the very queen of all girls, even though

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she was his sister. Walter was truly in love with his sister, and Edith was as much in love with her brother. They loved each other as only the greatest of lovers may love, but they were not cognizant of the fact. They believed that all brothers and sisters loved each other in the same way. Their letters were full of expressions of love. A stranger would have construed those letters as passing between lovers that must soon meet and unite in wedlock, or die of broken hearts. But they were letters between brother and sister, where wedlock was prohibited. The knowledge of that fact served as a sort of pacific antidote, and they lived on and loved in contentment. To find a place in their hearts for the love of another, such as they experienced each for the other was impossible. They were satisfied. Would this holy satisfaction hold out against time with its allurements? Only time can answer the question.

The nearest approach to a similar love was that of Edith and her teacher, Mrs. Olcott. Happily, this affection was not a one-sided affair. It was natural. The proposed visit to "The Cedars" was to develop a still closer relation between them, which each felt, perhaps, without the passing of words. The thought and hope were almost too sacred to be the subject of discussion between them. Mrs. Olcott could read the thoughts and desires of her pupil, and she did it in silence and prayer. The time could not come too quickly for the little woman. Mr. Marchand's letters to Edith always contained a few lines for Mrs. Olcott. Occasionally a perfumed letter with the post mark of "New Orleans" came for Mrs. Olcott. Edith knew the handwrite. She smiled, but said nothing. She only hoped and prayed, and in her hopes and prayers she was not alone. Another's heart beat

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with hope. Another's lips breathed similar prayers. Not even a suspicious whisper did Edith relate to Walter, her dearest brother, who knew her every other hope and ambition. To Edith it was too sacred a hope to dampen with the dew of gossip.

Whatever may have been the hopes and ambitions of Le-Berte Marchand in the matter, he had guarded the same with the secrecy of the grave. Walter may have had suspicions, but if so he gathered them from the circumstances that came under his observation, and not from any unguarded remarks of the father. Upon one occasion, however, while the improvements were being made at "The Cedars," Walter might have been heard to remark that: "An old fox is mighty hard to catch," but what he meant by the words can only be surmised. Walter felt that if the father had any intentions of changing his mode of life, there need not be such absolute secrecy about the affair. He believed that if Edith had the least suspicion of such a thing she would have told him of it ere this. To his mind there could be but one person, and that was Mrs. Olcott, of and about whom Edith always filled each letter to the limit.

Now, that the little lady was to visit "The Cedars" with Edith, no doubt the "murder would out." It would be a surprise to everybody, if such should happen. Walter was not in the least opposed to his father's marriage. Indeed, he would long ago have so advised if the father had signified a desire for his counsel in that behalf. Walter knew that the natural state of man is the married state; that the man who goes through life without a companion simply exists awhile, then passes away without having known the pleasures of life. Often did the young

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man picture in his mind the happy fireside of a cozy home where the young wife meets the husband at the gate with a loving kiss as he comes from his daily toil. Where, in the morning, as he leaves for his labors, he carries with him the loving impress of ruby lips upon his own, and a cheering word of comfort in his heart, the parting words of a sweet wife. A home where the one man loves the one woman, whom he calls his wife, and where the one man, the husband, is the beloved above all else by the one who hails him as husband.

The bonds of sympathy, love and affection in such a home are so inseparable, that if misfortune come and sweep away all earthly wealth, such true, loyal and companionable souls may yet make their home in a poor tent, around which the angry blasts of winter blow, but the fires of love in their hearts always burning brightly will radiate against the sides of the tattered tent, revealing pictures more beautiful, more sacred, richer and rarer than ever adorned the halls of stately mansion or graced the palace of king. The music of the infant's cry that comes from the home-made cradle in the corner, is sweeter to the ear of the father and mother than would be the Aeolian strains from the silver stringed orchestra hidden in the palm-leaved bower of the rich man's sumptuous dining hall.

True, Walter's father had, for many years, known the happiness of all that the words home and family meant, but that was no reason for his being deprived of that happiness in his old and declining years. His former happiness only tended to increase the contrast between the past and the present. Walter would, therefore, hail the day that could bring back to his father even a semblance of the old, old

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days. As he thus mused, sitting in his office, he was startled by a messenger who brought him the following message:

"Edith, Mrs. Olcott and myself will arrive on evening O. & C. train. Meet us. L. M."

"And now the social farce begins," said Walter to himself.

"I am mighty busy these days, but I suppose I'll have to make the best of it for the time being. I shall have Edith with me, God bless her. I wonder if loving a girl you could marry would be like the love I have for Edith. I don't suppose I ever will love a girl so that I would want to marry. The fact is, I've never loved any girl except sister Edith, and somehow I don't care to. I'll swear if it isn't a puzzle. All the other boys in college had sweethearts but me—I didn't care for a sweetheart. I was satisfied with my correspondence with sister Edith, and longed for her visits just as if she were my real sweetheart. And Edith seems to hold me in similar regard. I wonder if she will likely fall in love with some fellow, sooner or later? By thunder—"

Walter was astonished to find himself rising to his feet with clenched fist, the blood rushing to his face, at the same time experiencing a bitter pang of jealousy. He quickly drove the feeling from his mind by saying that Edith was his sister, and that her life was her own to do with as best suited her purpose.

The entrance of a client suddenly cleared his mind of all relation to the subject, and he was kept busy until time to meet the family at the train. He would have much rather had "the folks" gone to "The Cedars" and met them there. He knew that he would be literally covered with boxes and bundles of all sorts, which Edith would be sure to bring

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with her; and he detested the task of looking after holiday luggage. To make it more convenient, he engaged an extra conveyance which he stationed at the nearest point to the depot entrance.

At last the train came. Down the aisle he spied his visitors, and sure enough they were loaded down with band boxes and packages. Walter laughed as he remarked, mentally: "Sweet little Edith wouldn't know how to travel unless she had a cart load of boxes." Edith did not see her brother until she almost ran against him at the exit. Her load of boxes flew in every direction as she freed her arms, only to encircle them around Walter's neck in loving embrace, regardless of the passing throng. Some stared, others smiled and passed on, but little did brother and sister heed the curious world about them. Then came the formal introduction of Walter and Mrs. Olcott, followed by the gathering up of the packages, and proceeding to the conveyances.

"Father, you and Mrs. Olcott take this carriage and I will take Edith and her toy boxes in this one," said Walter, as they stepped out upon the curb.

"Oh, you need not speak so lightly of my luggage, Mr. Walter, or you will not see Santa Claus this Christmas," petulantly cried Edith, as they entered the carriage and were driven toward the dear old home, "The Cedars."

"How do you like the appearance of my teacher and friend?" asked Edith the very moment they were ensconced in the cab.

"Oh, I could not help admiring her long, long ago, from the constantly employed compliments in your letters. I felt that I had known her all my life, the moment I saw her. I think she must be a lovely woman."

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"Yes, and you shall love her more and more as you become better acquainted. I think she took a fancy for you long ago, for I have seen her sit and look at your picture for long periods of time, especially the picture you had taken when you were rather young."

"You and Mrs. Olcott are such inseparable friends, it will be hard to part when you finish college in the spring."

"Yes, indeed it will, if we have to part at all," said Edith, glancing askance at her brother, which aroused his curiosity.

"I do not understand, Edith? Why do you subjoin the doubtful mode?"

"Brother, I have only a slight suspicion that possibly Mrs. Olcott might come to live with us. That is all."

"Now, Edith, be a good little sister and tell me something more about those slight suspicions you have stored away in that pretty little head of yours. I think you have a secret, and you know it's wicked to keep a secret from a brother."

"We are at the gate now, and all I can say is, just keep those eyes open and those lips closed, and you'll be as wise as your little sister."

Passengers, bundles and all were delivered safely at the portals of the beautiful old home, where a royal welcome was extended to Mrs. Olcott, and where she was made to feel as a member of the family.

The holiday week was wholly given over to pleasures around the hearth-stone of the old home. Business at the office was tabooed so far as the elder Marchand was concerned. Walter could not wholly neglect the many duties, but he insisted on Edith spending a goodly portion of her time with him at the office, or down town. This, of course, threw Mrs. Olcott and the father together more than otherwise would

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have been the case. The theaters and operas were in the height of their season, and afforded a splendid opportunity for entertainment.

The vacation was altogether too short for Mr. Marchand, as well as for the visitors. They all agreed upon that point.

If there had been any doubt in Walter's mind as to the possible intentions of the elder Marchand, they were reduced from a doubt to a rather well defined idea, regardless of the absolute silence of the father. Edith and Walter both felt that the father would, sooner or later, take them into his confidence whenever he reached a favorable conclusion in the premises. They were really anxious for the consummation of the supposed project. Walter's good opinion of Mrs. Olcott rapidly grew into a warm affection. He realized that it was mutual. The brother and sister now freely discussed the affair in secret, and became more and more anxious about it. The day came for the departure of Edith and her friend. The father was more than agreeable and willing to escort them back to their Northern school. Some time after his return, he broke the silence between himself and his son. He began by drawing opinions from the son as to the qualities of their late visitor, which, of course, were all favorable. Walter knew what would finally come out, and he would wink in his sleeve and play the innocent.

"Of course, my son, I have about concluded that it will not do for Mrs. Olcott and Edith to be separated. I see that Edith is very fond of her, and having been constant companions for several years, Edith would be entirely lost and unhappy in our big home, so I thought if, in your judgment, it would be a wise plan to bring Mrs. Olcott to 'The Cedars' permanently, I would see if it could be accomplished."

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"Now, father, have not you and the lady been keeping a great big secret from your children for quite a long time?"

"No, indeed, my son, I have never directly asked the lady a question upon the subject. Of course I could not, consistently with the ideas of a true Southern gentleman, broach the subject to her while a guest under my roof. True, I believe the lady would not be averse to the position of the mistress of 'The Cedars,' and since it appears agreeable to my children I will write Mrs. Olcott a proposal this very day."

The fact was, that the proposal had already been penned, but it had not been committed to the care of the post. Having ascertained that he had the hearty approval of his son in the premises, and knowing that Edith would be filled with delight, the old gentleman carried the letter to the post-office in person and tenderly dropped it into the receptacle. It would appear to some people that an old man would look upon a second marriage as a business proposition, but not so with LeBerte Marchand. He was in love, deeply in love with the little lady. To him, she was the dearest creature on the earth, his children not excepted. He loved with a love that would have made a pygmy of Othello's love. Of course Marchand did not roam the forest and cut his sweetheart's name upon the trees, but he did write the name of "Norma Olcott" on the fly leaves of his books, and on scraps of paper, and the like. It was also a fact that the business at the office attracted him less, day by day, all of which Walter observed with a knowing smile, and wondered how an old man could become so romantic. He was glad, however, that his father's affections were bestowed upon the queenly Mrs. Olcott, whom Edith and himself already loved as a mother.

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The family circle would be one of mutual love and affection, a thing to be greatly desired. Walter looked forward to the time when he hoped to be honored of the people by being elected their City Attorney. He felt an inward sense of pride at the thought that Edith and his mother might share that honor with him. It would be a month after the election when Edith would return from college, and in all probability Mrs. Olcott would then become Mrs. Marchand and take up her permanent abode at "The Cedars."

When Mrs. Olcott received the letter of proposal from Mr. Marchand she was alone in her room. She was not greatly surprised. In fact, she rather expected something of the kind. Now, it was a reality, and just how to frame a reply, she was in great doubt. Was this not a gift of fortune, after all the years of privation, toil and uncertainty? Ah, that word, "uncertainty," caused her to start.

Again her mind quickly reverted to other days, and a shudder shook her frame. Again, as frequently of late, a doubt crossed her mind, and she cried from the depths of her soul: "O God, what shall I do? Why should this spectre of doubt and uncertainty follow me through all my life? More than twenty-five years have passed, and I am still haunted by uncertainty. O Lord, how long, how long——"

The poor woman fell into a fit of bitter weeping from which she had not recovered when Edith entered her room. Edith noticed the letter which had fallen upon the floor, and as quickly did she discern the handwriting. The thought flashed across her mind, "Why sorrow, instead of joy?" Her face flushed a livid hue as she stood a moment in silence, glancing first at the letter, then at her friend.

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CHAPTER X.

THE DILEMMA.

The thought that possibly Mrs. Olcott had become offended at the probable proposal of marriage by her father, instantly aroused Edith's native pride, and a feeling of resentment at once possessed her.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Olcott, for intruding. I will leave," said Edith, rather coldly.

"Oh, no, no, child. Please stay, for I need your help. Oh, I need you so much. You will be a comfort to me. Come, dear Edith, sit here by me, and let me tell you the story of of my life."

Edith, obedient to the request, nestled down upon a stool beside the elder lady, who, gently taking Edith's hands in hers, began relating the story of her life, a brief summary of which the reader has already gleaned from previous chapters. It was a pathetic story, indeed, leading up to the distress and perturbation of mind in which the little music teacher then found herself. Mrs. Olcott spoke of her pleasant association with Edith and her father and brother. How she had learned to love her little pupil in those years of constant companionship, and how she dreaded the final separation, if it should ever come. Then, too, of the happy days that she enjoyed while in the company of Mr. Marchand and

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his son Walter, with both of whom she was dearly in love, and for both of whom she retained the highest personal regard and esteem.

"Oh, Norma, Norma, my sweet, good mother," cried Edith, as she threw her arms around the neck of her companion and teacher, their unrestrained tears mingling together.

Having calmed themselves through their flood of tears, as is often the wont of the fair and gentle sex, and as is often her arms of offense and defense in battle, the two friends settled down to a calmer view of the perplexing and intensely interesting question. Mrs. Olcott invited Edith to read the letter, assuring her that in so doing she did not intend a breach of etiquette nor a lack of due respect and consideration for the feelings of the writer thereof. The letter was, indeed, just what Edith had suspected—a proposal of marriage to be consummated in the near future, if agreeable to the recipient.

"Suppose," said Mrs. Olcott, after Edith read the letter, "that after all these years it should be that my former husband is not dead, and that unfortunately he appear after my marriage with your father! Oh, horrors——" the little woman cried, shuddering as she uttered those words.

"But must you wear your whole life away in a terrible nightmare of doubt and uncertainty?" anxiously inquired the younger person.

"That is what has often occurred to me as so cruel and unjust. It is too great a burden for me to bear. I have done everything I could do to discover the truth, but without avail. I have waited and waited until now, the rich, ripe harvest of my weary life is slowly passing by, and I am still a wayside wanderer, unable to reap, to garner or to bring in

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any of the golden sheaves. Oh, Edith, my child, what can I do? Trust in me, little one, for I want your love and sympathy."

"I do trust you, and I love you, Oh, ever so much," said Edith in a joyful, cheerful mood, that had its immediate consoling effect upon her friend.

The matter was discussed pro and con in all its phases by the two friends without a settled conclusion having been reached. True, Mr. Marchand would expect a prompt reply, that is, within a reasonable length of time. He would certainly look upon any unwarranted delay with the feeling that his suit was not a welcome one.

Edith did not care to hazard the prospects by any undue delay, and suggested that all these matters could be fully explained after the couple had married, settled down in their happy, comfortable home, "The Cedars."

Though she was as anxious as was Edith, Mrs. Olcott looked beyond the engagement, beyond the marriage ceremony, beyond the "honeymoon," and saw the bare possibilities of casual thrusts of "a concealed past," and the ugly moods of "an irritable old man." She could not forbear the thoughts of such possible side thrusts and side cuts, through life. To her, such would be unbearable and wholly insupportable. She would, therefore, follow the only course which to her mind was thoroughly righteous and becoming to a well-born lady of the "Old South," and a course which she was sure would be appreciated by the honorable and upright Mr. Marchand. That course was, to relate to Mr. Marchand the full story of her life, her doubts, and fears, just as she had to his daughter Edith. Then if, in his judgment, there be nothing to fear, and he be willing to take her as his wife,

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no blame could thereafter attach to her. No side cuts of a "concealed past" could then haunt her as a horrid nightmare throughout her days. Besides, she knew that in Edith and Walter she had good lieutenants, both of whom would help her in this cruel struggle against fate. The more she pondered upon the matter, the more determined she became to follow this course.

While at first Edith did not fully accord with the plan to be adopted, because she feared the possibility of its failure, her objections melted away before the righteous arguments of her older and more mature friend, and in the end the two were in happy accord. Silently and secretly, however, Edith resolved to ascertain, if possible, the legal status of a case like that of Mrs. Olcott's. She felt that were she similarly situated, she would ascertain her legal rights and would act accordingly, regardless of all other considerations, though she did not intimate the same to her friend. She would ascertain, if possible, what legal barrier there was, if any, to prevent the consummation of her friend's marriage. Consequently, the same mail that carried Mrs. Olcott's letter to the elder Marchand also carried a letter from Edith to her brother Walter. Edith's letter contained a plain and succinct statement, as related by Mrs. Olcott, but without disclosing the identity of the real parties at interest. The letter also urged prompt, but very careful consideration of the matter, and a plain, decisive reply at the earliest possible moment.

"What the deuce is my little sister up to now?" thought Walter, upon reading the letter. "Certainly she is not entering the study of law. Oh, well, the dear little girl has appealed to me, and her appeal shall not be in vain. Generous

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hearted, she is no doubt helping some poor soul to find the light that will safely lead to paths of happiness and peace. How glorious this world would be if all persons would seek to bring sunshine and gladness to others. Well, my little sister is the sweetest, dearest, best girl on earth, and I am the proudest brother, I reckon, of any fellow who ever had a sister."

Walter's meditations were interrupted at this juncture by the father, who, holding a bit of tinted, perfumed paper in his hand, entered the office, and seating himself near his son, said:

"My son, I have heretofore confided in you upon the matter of my desire to again enter the married state. In that connection, I wish to further confide in you, and to avail myself of your good judgment. I have a letter from Mrs. Olcott in response to my proposal of marriage, in which she relates a rather strange story, but the main facts of which I had partially known through former conversations with her. I think I am not betraying a confidence, nor showing discourtesy to the lady, by asking you to read the letter, before we discuss the situation."

As Walter followed the plainly inscribed statement of the life story of the writer of the letter, he readily comprehended the reason for his sister's solicitude. It was now as clear as day to him, though he resolved to keep the matter a secret within his breast. Having read the letter, he returned it to his father, and with an expression of countenance betokening great interest, remarked:

"Well, and what now?"

"And what now? That is the question," returned the father.

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"We'll see what the Statutes have to say on the subject," said Walter, as he turned his office chair and reached for the book of State laws. Being a young lawyer, Walter made it a practice to consult the State laws upon every question with which he had to deal, before he ventured to reach a conclusion within his own mind.

"No use to look, Walter, there are no statutory laws upon the question," interrupted the father.

"Have you examined, to ascertain?"

"No, but I know it is so."

"Sometimes we are mistaken, you know, when we think we are most certain."

"Oh, well, a young man won't learn by being told, so proceed with your investigation," said the elder man, feeling somewhat irritable. After a careful perusal of the indices, Walter replied:

"No, father, I do not find statutory law covering the question, but there is a provision that where the statutory law is silent, the common law shall be applied. Now the common law is, that when a person has not been heard of for seven or more years, he is presumed to be dead."

"Yes, I knew that. In this case, the first husband has been presumed to be dead for twenty-five or more years."

"And properly so, for he was last seen and heard of in the very heat of the war between the States, and he being one of the participants in that war only strengthens the presumption."

"You do not quite understand me, my son. I know that to our marriage there is no legal obstacle. The legal presumption that after a silence of seven years a man is presumed to be dead had its inception and was founded in well.

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grounded reasons, based upon the good of society in times long past, when the brawn and muscle of old England were going to populate new countries and new worlds. Some of her sons were afterwards heard from and others not. The result was, there were many charming women left without husband and many fair children without father. Many of these were a care upon the people, upon society, and many of them could have found the protecting hand of husband and father but for the law against double marriage. Then it was that the laws of England were enacted to the effect that when a person has not been heard of for a period of seven years, he is presumed to be dead. But that did not vitiate the former marriage. Two things only legally vitiate a marriage, to-wit: legal divorce, and death."

"Suppose, in a case of this kind, after twenty-five or thirty years' absence, the first husband reappears upon the scene."

"Well, suppose. What good does it do to suppose? The jig would be up then, perhaps."

"Yes, I think it is a case of 'perhaps' more than anything else. There's no possibility of the man reappearing in this case. Besides, if he did, and he wanted to find his wife, he would go to her old home in Tennessee. He could never trace her, for all her people are dead or gone away. He could never find her where she now is, and much less would be his chances to find her, once she is under your roof as your wife. No, father, it is absolutely out of the question. You are trying to cross a bridge which you will never reach."

"I think you are right, my boy. You talk like a veteran in the cause. You are really inspiring. If, in your judgment, I would be safe in consummating this union, I shall be happy to follow your advice. What say you?"

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"In my judgment the step you are about to take is perfectly safe. I will not advise you to take it, nor would I advise any person to place a bet on a certain horse in a race, or marry a certain person. It looks too much like intermeddling. However, I am glad to know that you have set your affections upon such a good, loveable character as I know Mrs. Olcott must be, and as Edith declares her to be."

The son well knew that the father had decidedly made up his mind to consummate the marriage, before he sought consolation rather than advice from his son. Having been enamored by so lovely a character as Mrs. Olcott, it was to be expected that nothing should stand in the way to bar the completion of the elder gentleman's plans. Walter knew that. That is, he knew it as reasonably as one can judge of coming events that appear within the horoscope of what may be termed certainty. It pleased Walter, however, to study the apparent cunning of the father, who affected a great burden of doubt as to what course he should follow in the matter. Walter knew just how to prolong the anxious "counsel" which the father had sought. The fear that Edith would advise against the marriage under the circumstances apparently filled the father's mind with additional doubt. So strenuously did the elderly gentleman dwell upon this phase of the question, that Walter decided that the secret of the sister's letter must be divulged. He deemed it best, now that there was no longer any cause for secrecy. He therefore handed the letter to the father for his perusal.

"Why, bless my life, the girl has cited this very case. To be sure, Mrs. Olcott states in her letter that she acquainted Edith with all the facts. Certainly my daughter would not

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hope to find a legal barrier to my marriage with Mrs. Olcott. Do you think so?"

Walter purposely hesitated, well knowing that the father would fret, without suffering any pain, which was really amusing to witness.

"I say, my boy, do you think Edith could hope to bar my progress in this matter?"

"Oh, no, certainly not. I take it that Edith is sincerely anxious to know that there is no legal obstruction in the way to your marriage and happiness. She evidently had hopes for an answer before Mrs. Olcott should reply to your letter of proposal. It is plain to me that Edith is as anxious for the marriage to be consummated as you evidently are."

"Ah, my boy, it is treading on dangerous ground. Marriage is not what it used to be—I can see that. Domestic felicity is the exception these days, rather than the rule. Why, my son, in my early practice of the law, divorces were as scarce as hen's teeth. Divorces were looked upon with disfavor, and we lawyers sometimes deliberated before taking charge of a divorce case. It is not so of late years. You have observed how these divorce cases increase. As you have handled the most of them coming into our office of late, you must have ascertained the prevailing cause of this growing and lamentable evil."

"Yes, I have, father, but I can not see how you connect this growing evil, for it is an evil, with your prospective marriage. Certainly you do not anticipate a future divorce."

"No, of course not. But one should look well before he leaps into the matrimonial sea. Some people take the leap just as a person leaps into the Gulf for a surf bath. Fortunately for some of them, they find domestic bliss, while the

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great majority of that class find a living hell. That is what it would be for a person of fine sentiment or nobility of character. Result, divorce."

"Really, father, I've not given any study to the question. I've often heard it said that marriage is a lottery, but I care little about that question so far as my personal interests are concerned."

"Tut, tut, my boy. You will little know what life is until you have a home, with loving companion and prattling babes. You will change your notion some of these days on that score."

"No, father, not while sister Edith lives, for my love for her is wholly sufficient, if non-effective and beyond marital avail."

"A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT"

CHAPTER XI.

"A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT."

Walter Marchand survived his sudden bound into notoriety and popular favor gracefully, and with no undue degree of vanity or self importance, which, of course, made him all the more popular among those with whom he came in daily contact. He remained the earnest student of his college days, and became a zealous worker upon all matters entrusted to his care. His success in his profession was not only forecasted by his friends, but was realized as a fact from the very beginning of his career as a lawyer. It soon became commonly known that the young lawyer would take no case except it be meritorious, in his judgment, and that he would then throw his very soul into it to win. The courts readily came to respect his opinions on law questions, and the juries soon began to believe in the justness of his side of a case. It was no trouble, apparently, for young Marchand to win his cases. It was not an uncommon thing to hear it remarked upon the streets, that "If young Marchand is in the case, he is sure to win it."

When the elder Marchand returned from a visit, though he had been away but a short time, he was pleased to note his son's prosperity, and rejoiced in his success. His former day dreams and visions of fancy, in this regard, were being

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realized beyond his expectations. He was justly proud of this noble son. The son had taken up the professional work of the office and court with an aptness that was surprising even to the father, who was now growing rather old, and had long since lost the snap, vim and vigor of his earlier days. Walter came into the practice just at a time to save his father's business from gradual decay. In fact, some of the old time clients who had of late years gradually changed their business into other hands, returned to the Marchands.

"That is what new blood and youth does, my boy," remarked the father one day when one of those old time clients returned with some extraordinarily good business, and insisted on laying down a large check as a retainer fee. "I have realized for some time that I needed help in this office, and I am more than proud that my own son comes to my aid in the very niche of time."

"I have not noticed your powers decaying in any degree; and you are certainly a better lawyer today than you were ten or twenty years ago," answered the son.

"Oh, to be sure, I am more capable of handling a case in the court when I have the facts and witnesses at my disposal, but I have not the push, energy and tenacity of former years. Our clients of today seem to want their legal affairs attended to promptly, without any delay whatever. In former years, it was not so."

"Well, I think it is better so. If one keeps his business matters right up to date, he knows just how he stands. If a lawyer delays attention to his business, matters accumulate and he loses interest in much of the business, therefore neglects it, to the detriment of his client."

"No doubt you are right, my son, and I am glad to have

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you in charge of our business. Times have greatly changed during my life. Of course, the results of the war forced an altogether new system of business upon us. It brought in its train the great problem of caring for the negro, a problem that it may take years to solve.

"I am of the opinion that a serious mistake was made in giving to the negro the right of suffrage. Their emancipation was, no doubt, a remedy which time was bound to bring about. I doubt not that in the future the question of negro suffrage will give rise to the most serious and perplexing political problems with which our country shall have to deal."

The elder Marchand recounted the many phases of political history through which he had passed during the twenty or more years immediately following the close of the civil war, all of which were exceedingly interesting to the younger man. It was evident that Walter was now becoming more or less imbued with the political spirit, and that he would, sooner or later, take a hand in the political affairs of the community. True, he had already been solicited to become a candidate for the office of City Attorney, first by the one faction and then by the other. The two factions in the city had waged bitter war against each other for years, although they both were members of the same political party and faith, in national politics. Locally, their differences were the result of personal ambitions, and local newspaper jealousies. Their campaigns usually consisted in "mud throwing," charges and counter charges of perfidy and unfitness for public confidence and public trust. Neither of the two daily papers could see any good in any member of the opposing faction.

Good men who had never taken any interest in the local

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political turmoil, men whose names were synonyms of honor, fairness and integrity, once they entered the political arena and allied themselves with one faction or the other, immediately became a target for the opposing faction. Their names were bandied about, coupled with reflections and insinuations not at all comporting with their former reputations of honor and high standing. Many were the cases of mortal combat and homicide resulting therefrom, but little did such results lessen the relentless warfare.

Walter Marchand became well acquainted with the doings in local politics, and resolved to take sides with neither faction. He, with others, saw that the people, the plain people of the city, had long been the dupes of both factions and of the two daily newspapers. That, between the two factions, the plain people had been tossed about, to and fro, as upon the waves of a treacherous sea. They had been blinded, hoodwinked, cajoled and deceived, while the best interests of their city had suffered untold losses. For him to enter into partnership with either faction was to run the gauntlet of crimination and scandal from the other side. To that he would not submit. To refuse alliance with both factions might bring down upon his head the fire of both factions. One thing he had resolved upon, and that was, that he would make the race for the office of City Attorney. He made known his intentions to the elder Marchand, and the matter was gone over thoroughly between them. The father deplored the idea at the start, but reluctantly consented in the end. A daily paper of small proportions and of smaller political influence was the only organ to be looked to for a medium through which he might reach the people—the other two daily newspapers were the purchased organs of the respective factions.

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Not many days elapsed until a secret conference was held in the Marchand offices. The members of that conference were some of the most substantial business men of the city, who not only had been long-time friends of the Marchands, but who, also, had grown weary of the local political turmoil. Realizing that the best interests of the city were subverted to the political whims of the factions at war, they decided that a change must be brought about. They had supported the two daily papers more through fear than from desire, and longed for an opportunity to cut loose from both. The little weakling, "The Daily Telegram," as it was called, had never had the support of the business element of the city. In fact, its subscription list was greater than either of the other organs, though that fact had not been known; but its advertising patronage was limited.

Walter Marchand, a staunch, honest, honorable young attorney, who could not be induced to enter into partnership with either political faction, was now to come before the people for the office of City Attorney, and it became necessary that the Telegram should be revived and supported by those who desired cleaner local government. One conference led to another, always secret, and day after day there appeared evidences of renewed life, vigor and prosperity in "The Daily Telegram." Walter had written to a friend who had entered the newspaper world, and was making as great success in his chosen field of labor as was Walter in his. Joe Butler was the former college "chum" of Walter Marchand, and during the last two years he had exhibited his special abilities upon the Mobile Register. Through Walter's influence, Joe Butler was now in full charge of The Daily Telegram. The effect of his management was magical. The

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size of the paper was soon increased so as to accommodate the rapidly growing advertising patronage.

The Daily Telegram announced its independence in local politics, and for a cleaner local government, but took sides with neither local faction. Space in the paper could not be purchased by either faction at any price, and the statement to that effect was printed in large, bold headlines. The machines of both factions read the notice with fear and trepidation. The general expression among the people—the common people—was: “A Daniel has come to judgment.”

The new paper was hailed with delight by the common people, who had become disgusted with the vituperation of the two older dailies. The people throughout the whole State became interested, for they, too, had deplored the rotten political condition into which the “Queen City of the South” had grown. The State press predicted a brighter future for the city if it could only rid itself of the political factions, which had marred its fair name.

A new and independent party was predicted for the city. The young paper took on the form of a prospective political giant, though it had so far not named a candidate for any office, nor had it even indicated that such was its intention. The secret caucuses were not abandoned by any means, but instead grew in point of membership and importance. The city was in a state of suspense. The city election was but a month ahead, and if anything was to be done, the time had come. So the caucus agreed. The opera house was secured for a stated time for a public meeting of the citizens. The galleries were reserved for the negroes, alone. Then came the announcement in The Daily Telegram. It came like a peal of thunder from a clear sky to the ringleaders of both

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factions. It invited the good people of the city, ladies and gentlemen, to attend the meeting at the opera house on the evening stated. The object of the meeting was stated to be for the betterment of local government and for purer local politics. It recited the fact that the condition of the city was a deplorable one, and that each of the political factions charged the other with the responsibility. Perhaps both factions were to blame. No charges were made against either, but the people were left to judge for themselves. Something would be done at the convention of citizens, no doubt, to relieve the city from its condition. If not, shame should ever be the people's lot.

The day came, and with it the people turned out en masse. Hundreds were unable to gain admission and were turned away. The opera house was packed with people from dome to pit. Upon the stage, when the curtain rose, were at once recognized the leading business and professional men of the city who had never been known to take an active part in local politics. For a moment there was a deathly silence throughout the great house. Then of a sudden, as if by one great impulsive wave, the clapping of hands and applause became almost deafening. The handwriting was upon the wall. The people saw it. Joe Butler saw it. Walter Marchand and all his friends saw it. And the political allies of the two factions saw it. They required no particularizing to understand it. Some of them quickly edged out of the house and hastened to their political bosses to tell the news. Others concluded to at once "get from under" and join in the war cry of "purer politics and better local government." They then and there forsook their old allies before a single speech was made, and before they were even informed of a certainty

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of the object of the convention. It appeared useless for any one to state the object. No one asked of his neighbor the nature or object of the meeting. Without being told, the least astute seemed intuitively to know. The wave of applause was hard to check. The editor and manager of The Daily Telegram stepped to the front of the stage. The cheering and applause increased. The brass band struck up "Dixie." The audience ran wild. Hats, coats, women's shawls and other loose articles filled the air. Order and quiet could not be restored, for the people began to realize that they were about to be led out of the wilderness, and that the promised land was in sight. An accident restored order. In the very height of the uproar and applause, a piece of scenery dropped from above the stage and remained suspended in full view of the audience. As sudden as the fall of the scene, was the restoration of order and perfect silence in the big house. The scene was a single setting and center piece, showing a young woman clinging to the cross, underneath of which was painted the familiar words: "Simply to the Cross I Cling."

In the speeches that followed, reference was made to the accident or incident as a good omen, and a signal of the success of the people's new undertaking. Joe Butler was the principal speaker. He referred to the local political doings of the past, and the present deplorable condition of the city. He told of the secret caucuses of the better element of the business men, and the object of the meeting. He declared that if the people, at that meeting, would resolve to elect a bold, honest, fearless man for City Attorney, it would prove the rising star of their hope and the city's prosperity. No sooner had he proposed the plan, than the audience, as

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with one accord, applauded their hearty approval. A wave of silence followed, when a man far back in the audience shouted the name of Walter Marchand. Five thousand voices cried back the answer, "Walter Marchand."

The young man was escorted to the front of the stage amidst the greatest uproar of applause he had ever witnessed. He raised his hand for silence, and it came as suddenly as when the scenery had dropped a moment before. It showed the reverence and esteem in which he was held by that vast concourse of citizens. He was expected to make a speech. He knew that. He realized with grateful heart the honor the people were conferring upon him in that deep hush that fell over them, at the raising of his hand. He was embarrassed—what young man would not have been. He fully realized the responsibility of the step he was about to take. He was bold and fearless in every duty. He must not now shrink or falter at the very threshold of this new duty. The friends of his father and of himself expected great things, but the people expected greater things of him. He paused a moment, but in that moment he lived a century. His native courage siezed him, and he said:

"I am truly grateful, grateful beyond my power of expression, for the honor you confer upon me, one of the humblest citizens among you. I am not a politician, and am not acquainted with the fine arts or the science of politics, if such there be. My highest aim and ambition is to lead an honorable life so as to merit the good will and respect of my fellow townsmen. Should I ever be selected to fill a position of public trust, I shall perform my duties without favor to friends or fear of foes. I have been solicited by the managers of both political factions to submit my name for the office of City Attorney, but I have declined both.

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"I do not object to serving the people in that capacity, but if I serve at all, it must be a service to the whole people, and not to a faction. I may say that at the request of many of the best citizens, some of whom surround me here, I have consented to ask the people of the city to support me for this office. I consented upon the condition that the people would agree to support me regardless of their former political affiliations. I now ask you, may I expect your solid support?"

An affirmative response came from all parts of the house.

"I make you one pledge, to do my whole duty, without fear or favor, and no other pledge or promise shall be made. That is sufficient. Thanking you for this great test of loyalty to honest government and feeling grateful for your kind promises of support, I leave the future of the campaign with you and all other good citizens of our beloved city."

Walter Marchand closed his short address amidst the greatest ovation ever before witnessed in the Crescent City. He was hurried out by the stage exit and to his office so as to avoid the crush that waited to greet him. The excitement was intense. Upon the streets the cry was heard upon every corner: "A Daniel has come to judgment." It became the war-cry of the campaign. The Daily Telegram made one great headline across the title page, thus: "*A Daniel Has Come to Judgment*," following with a full account of the meeting, and giving the names of the prominent business and professional men who held seats of honor upon the stage, and who, it was understood, were backing the candidacy of young Marchand with their moral and financial support.

A fine, large portrait of the candidate adorned the first page of The Telegram. The article recited the many inci-

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dents of his courage, honor, honesty and integrity, and prophesied his election by the people beyond question. The weak-kneed of both old factions began to climb into the Marchand, or the people's band wagon. They left the old factions as rats deserting a sinking ship. Citizens who had previously paid little heed to the local conditions now awakened from their apparent sleep and took up the cry of: "Marchand and honest government."

The two old daily papers now had something to do rather than that of besmirching the opposing faction. They saw great danger in the ominous looking cloud arising in the horizon. At first they each jeered at the puny stripling, as they termed the young giant.

Next they scoffed and tried to belittle his infantile attempt at reform, but the dark cloud rose higher and higher in the skies. The more astute ones sniffed the breeze of battle ahead. The two old organs now began a joint attack upon the young giant, casting slurs and insinuations. One by one the large advertising patrons notified the managers to cut out their advertisements. This opened their eyes. It required investigation. The advertising manager appeared at the office of Jones, Brown & Co., a large advertiser, to inquire as to the suspension of their patronage. The anxiously sought information was readily acquired in a quiet but positive manner, as follows:

"We cannot indorse the course The Daily Trumpet has taken against Marchand, the people's candidate for City Attorney. He has not molested nor even referred to either of his opponents, nor to the respective daily papers which support them. Not until the Daily Trumpet changes its tactics shall we again lend it our patronage."

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The information, given to the managing editor, took his breath for a moment. He remonstrated, and criticised Jones, Brown & Co. with a whole column. The next morning Smith, Lang, Burrell & Co., together with several smaller patrons, notified the much grieved daily of their withdrawal from the advertising columns.

The election was but three weeks ahead, and the dark cloud had mounted higher and higher until it hung almost over the city. It looked portentous, and the occasional gusts of wind that came from it appeared as the forerunners of a genuine cyclone. The wise prophets of both factions now got their heads together and planned as against a common foe. They argued that their divided forces could not hope longer against fate. The candidate of the McBride faction withdrew from the race for City Attorney and bespoke kind words for his opponent of the Wilkins faction. What was intended as a strong and strategical move, proved a most disastrous farce. The storm cloud grew darker and more portentous, and in flaming outline against the black embankment appeared the livid likeness of Walter Marchand. It drove consternation into the ranks of the McBride faction and filled the Wilkins ranks with fear and trembling. The old time herders could no longer handle the flocks. The shepherd's voice no longer called the lambs into the fold. The flocks scattered upon the hillsides and strayed into the byways, highways and hedges. No longer was the shepherd's crook a sign of peace and fair weather amidst the grazing herds. The dark cloud in the sky spoke in louder tones than the pleading or commanding voice of the shepherds, and the election was but two weeks off.

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CHAPTER XII.

HONEST GOVERNMENT.

The McBride and the Wilkins factions, bitter as they were against each other, had arranged a truce between themselves so far as the office of City Attorney was concerned.

Young Marchand would be a thorn in the side of whichever faction proved successful at the election. They each knew that. They also knew that the political graves of past administrations were not too deep nor too sacred to deter the energetic young man from digging down to corpses, and holding inquests and post mortems. Political post mortems was one of the subjects that was most abhorrent to the leaders of both the McBride and Wilkins factions. That was one subject upon which the knowing ones of both factions could admirably agree. The common people, or "the herd," were expected to plant beautiful white flowers upon the graves of past administrations. The leaders, the bosses, would sing dirges, and pronounce eulogies.

But a change was rapidly coming over the common herd. The leaders of both factions observed the rapid change, and they marveled as they beheld. Many of the strong supporters and blind followers of both factions now gave signs of weakness, while some of them frankly and openly declared their preference for the honest young attorney and honest govern-

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ment. They, many of them, could not be won back; they were irretrievably lost to both the McBride and the Wilkins factions. Pleading could not win them back. Threats could not scare them; cajolery could not move them; nor could promises of "good jobs" buy them.

The Marchand forces were daily increasing as certainly as were the ranks of the factions decreasing. The fact was plain to everybody, while the beating of the bushes and the noise of the ward heelers only served to impress the truth of that fact upon the minds of the lame and halting. The Daily Telegram was growing stronger and more powerful every day. The extraordinary advertising patronage now accorded it afforded a splendid revenue, which, in part, was used to distribute several thousand extra copies among the citizen voters, gratis. The citizen voters read the paper with eagerness, as a rule. The Daily Clarion and The Daily Trumpet, the hired organs of the McBride and Wilkins factions, raged and foamed. They had reckoned without their host. They had rested secure in the assumption that, as always in the past they had hoodwinked the people, so in the future would that task be an easy one. They foamed and fretted about the welfare of the city. They abhorred distasteful local politics, and accused the Telegram and its candidate for City Attorney of being carpetbaggers, interlopers, experiments. At the same time, every candidate in both factions was being unmercifully fleeced and bled by those two organs. Their small spaced announcements were substituted by flaming advertisements and editorial articles, all of which was deemed necessary to the success of the cause, but which also cost the candidate double the usual and ordinary advertising rates. Political campaigns in the City of New Orleans were the harvest times

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for The Daily Clarion and Daily Trumpet. The harvests were not, however, legitimate nor honorable. The candidate for public office was simply "held up," pilfered, robbed, fleeced, by the two organs. Once his money went into the organ's coffers he was thereafter at the organ's mercy. True, his announcement continued to appear in the organs, but occasional side-thrusts, anonymous suggestions, or editorial praise of his opponent would seem to require "special mention" in the news columns at double advertising rates. These "specials" were always suggested by intermediate friends connected with the organ, perhaps the advertising solicitor. The advertising solicitor during these campaigns was frequently a stranger, but who was thoroughly posted on the local situation. He knew every tender, every weak spot of every candidate. If one means did not bring results, he would adopt another that would, and it always ended in the complete separation and divorcement of the poor candidate from his money. Such was the system of newspaper pillage at that time in the fair Southern city as relating to politics.

But this was not the greatest burden of a candidate's life during a campaign in that fair city. A candidate for public office was generally considered as a legitimate prey for a certain class of the people of all parties. Certain societies, clubs and organizations which failed, during a political campaign to hold one or more pay entertainments, picnics, balls, barbecues, suppers, or other kind of thing, were considered derelict of duty. Of course, no candidate for a public office could afford to offer an affront to any one of those aggregations by refusing to purchase one or more tickets for each

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attraction, provided he had the money or could purchase on credit, payable "before the election."

Every candidate knew that the simple purchase of those tickets would not make him a single vote, because he was expected to buy the tickets whether he attended the function or not. If he attended the function, a thing none but amateur candidates ever did, he was afforded an experience "long to be remembered." To refuse to buy tickets, however, was sometimes construed to be an affront to the "society" or "aggregation," and frequently caused a candidate the loss of many votes. So, the candidate usually showed "his good will" and "helped the cause" by making his purchase of tickets.

But this was in the circle of what was known as "polite politics," and did not reach the "rank and file," the "faithful," the "ward heeler," the "floating element," nor the "negro." All these elements had to be taken into account, for they, each and all had their "political pull," their "political 'fluence," and were a part of the machinery of a campaign. No candidate could expect this machinery to run smoothly without fuel and plenty of "oil," and the candidate was expected to furnish both, if he desired the benefit of the political "pull" and "'fluence" in his behalf.

Joe Butler, the college friend of young Marchand, and the editor, manager and publisher of The Daily Telegram, had charge of the Marchand campaign. The two men were together a great deal during the canvass among the citizens. Butler had been in politics before, and knew how to escape the "all important" elements that "hang on" like leeches in every campaign. He knew, to a nicety, the modes, systems and methods of the armies that swarm around the can-

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didate in all political campaigns, and he knew as well how to handle those political vipers. He did not shun them nor keep out of their way. In fact, he mingled with them, talked with them, introduced his candidate to them. He had an object in doing so. He knew the whole thing was revolting to his candidate and friend, but, at the same time, it was an experience of invaluable benefit to young Marchand. The system, or practice, was disgusting to honest, honorable men, and he knew that when young Marchand had reached the limit of his patience, his revolt would be volcanic in its nature. Butler was anxiously awaiting the reaction. For him it could not come too soon.

Young Marchand earnestly began rebelling against intermingling with the "hobo" element. Butler, winking in his sleeve, insisted that to be a politician, one must be a "Bohemian," a "good fellow," and in Rome, "a Roman." Replying, at last, young Marchand declared that he would not submit to such practice for all the public offices in the United States.

"Then," said Butler, "at a public meeting declare yourself from the stump. Announce your ideas upon political campaigns, and let the people know where you stand. The Daily Telegram will take pleasure in reporting your platform, and will issue ten thousand extra copies to be placed in the homes of the people."

"I'll do it, and the sooner you can arrange the public meeting the better it will suit me," quickly responded the young lawyer.

So said, so done. The Daily Telegram duly announced a mass meeting and rally for the following evening, and everybody was invited. The news spread around that the

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young lawyer was to announce his platform of principles and to declare what might be expected of him in the event of his election. This morsel of news was read with as much interest by the opposing factions as it was by the friends of good government, for, if young Marchand were elected, he was almost certain to drag forth the skeletons from the political closets of former administrations.

The time for the mass meeting came around. There never had been witnessed in that quaint old Southern city such a throng of citizens, men and women, as assembled around the monument on Lafayette Square, on this occasion. A platform had been erected for the speakers and committee men. The evening was beautiful, clear and moonlit. The great mass of people surged like the waves of the sea; and for a block distant many of them were trying to edge their way closer to the speaker's platform, while the brass band rendered several numbers, keeping the people in good spirit until the speaking should begin. Although it lacked fifteen minutes of the time to open the meeting, according to the announcement, it was certain that no speaker could make himself heard by half of those already present and anxious to hear, so large was the crowd. Joe Butler was already aware of that fact. He was equal to the occasion. He immediately sent out several strong voiced men who climbed high upon telegraph poles along the street where they could make themselves distinctly heard. Then Butler mounted the speaker's stand and announced that, as no speaker could make himself heard by such a large audience, he had decided to give a full report of the speeches in The Daily Telegram the following day, and that the same would be distributed among the people, gratis. That everybody who desired a

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copy of the paper could procure same at all news stands without pay and without price. Butler was then followed by his assistants from the telegraph poles, each of whom repeated the same statement, so that everyone present was informed upon the matter.

The exercises opened in due form, and young Marchand was introduced to the audience. He needed no introduction—that was a mere matter of form. As he appeared at the front of the platform, the vast audience went wild with enthusiasm. The air was rent with the shouts of the people as by the peal of thunder. It echoed and reverberated from street to street, until it rolled out upon the placid waters of the Mississippi, where peacefully lay the great tramps of commerce awaiting their cargoes of that fleecy staple, the “king of the South.” It was a mighty chorus of human voices, such as was never heard before nor since in that great city. There had been no practice, no drilling of voices to produce this unison and simultaneous outburst of the thousands present. It required no director with poised baton to bring forth this instantaneous chorus from ten thousand throats. The people were filled with the spirit of liberty and freedom, and they now rejoiced that they had a leader who would lead them out of bondage and set them free again. The sight of their young leader, as he appeared upon the rostrum, thrilled them and set their very souls on fire. No wonder they shouted as one man. No wonder the welkin rang as it had never rung before. Their enthusiasm was borne out upon the evening breezes until it permeated every artery of that great and busy city. It echoed from a thousand steam whistles along the wharves and railroad yards. The surging crowd knew the meaning. The spirit of free-

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dom and liberty possessed them afresh, and their enthusiasm knew no bounds.

More than a half hour had passed ere the great crowd of people present contented itself to listen to the words of its spokesman and leader. Young Marchand, in the full flush of zealous, honest youth, began his address. We shall content ourselves with but a few quotations therefrom, permitting the reader to draw upon his imagination to the point of satisfaction. In part, the young orator said:

"I am expected to declare my principles and pronounce my platform here tonight. It is useless to tell you that I believe in honest government, for we all believe in that, and if we, the people, would be honest with ourselves and honest with our candidates for public office, we would elect honest men and have honest government. But we don't do that. We expect every other fellow to be honest, while we know down deep in our hearts that some people are dishonest with the candidate, and with the officer after he is elected. A certain class looks upon a candidate for public office as a shining mark to be robbed, bled, plundered and despoiled, until they have made his campaign cost him more money than the legitimate emoluments of the office afford. Not satisfied with that, they seek personal favors of him as an officer, and often such favors as they would not wish for the public to know about.

"My friends, human nature is not overly strong. Men are but human beings and liable to err, at the best; but when a good, clean citizen has been induced to stand for a public office, and, later, finds that he has been looted, his good name bandied about, his reputation besmirched, his nature revolts, and, sometimes, he might be tempted to come

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out of office with as small financial loss as possible.

"So far in this campaign, had I yielded to the numerous attempts that were made to extract money from me, I would have expended a sum much larger than are the honest emoluments of the office which I seek. And should I be elected to the office, I'm sure there will be a certain class of citizens applying for certain favors which I promise you shall never be granted by me.

"My friends, while we permit this deplorable practice of despoiling candidates for public office to continue, how can we expect honest government? Whenever you see a candidate who is buying tickets for all the balls, concerts, picnics, barbecues, and spending his money on the thousands of schemes devised during campaigns with which to decoy and rob candidates, you may rest assured that such a man is not the proper person to be elected to any public office.

"But there are extenuating circumstances. Few, if any, candidates willingly lavish their money upon these things. They feel constrained so to do under the pressure brought to bear upon them from many quarters. They are entreated, bantered, caressed, cajoled, frightened, and put through a thousand 'grafting' processes, and by many people who have not stopped to think that they are committing a wrongful act. True it is, that many of these campaign 'grafters' ply their nefarious trade through love of money gained by vile and lecherous methods. That kind of people care little about honest government—they are worse than highway robbers—they don't want honest government. With an honest administration they would find no place—their occupation would be gone.

"Now, my friends, if you are in favor of an honest gov-

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ernment, be honest with yourselves and with the candidate for public office. Do not make it cost a man more than the office is worth. Then be honest with him after he is elected. Don't try to persuade him to favor you in some matter and in some manner that you would be ashamed for the people to know about. If the whole people will do this, we will always have honest government.

"So far as I am personally concerned, I say to you that I shall not, while a candidate for public office, allow any person to sell me something I do not want. I shall treat no person to a cigar or glass of beer while a candidate for office. I shall not allow a single promise to be drawn from me squinting at favoritism. And, as to my official conduct if elected, I shall not grant a favor to any man on earth that I would not have openly published to the world. If you want that kind of officer, I ask your support. If not, I don't want your votes. If there are not enough honest votes in this city to elect me, I do not want the office. An honest government must be backed up by honest citizenship, and when the citizenship becomes corrupt, there is no longer any hope for honest government."

The following day, The Daily Telegram contained Marchand's speech in full. The people read it over and over again. True, it rebuked a certain class of the people, but upon sober reflection they knew it contained the truth. His plainly spoken truths settled down in their hearts, and many of them who had been guilty, determined that the day for reformation was at hand. Marchand's plain statement that a clean government could not be expected of an unclean people was unanswerable. His election was now conceded by both factions, unless there be some unfair

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method of forestalling it. The factions held a secret caucus, at which it was decided that, as Marchand had not been nominated by a regularly organized political party, his name could not legally be placed upon the official ballot. This idea was too bright to be kept in the dark. It was too good news to be kept from the anxious public. The joyous plan was heralded broadcast as a great strategic move on the part of the old "substantial" factions. It was glorious news to the loyal members of the old guard, but it was doomed to a short life. There were still courts of justice in the land. Justice had not fled from the jurist's bench. The people had some rights which the McBride and Wilkins factions could not abridge nor subvert. Those rights were guaranteed to them by the Constitution of the State. At first, the people stood aghast at the brazenness of the old factions in thus attempting to deprive them of their constitutional and inherent rights.

The Daily Telegram assured the people that their rights should be sacredly preserved. And they were preserved. The refusal of the authorities to print the name of Walter Marchand, the name of the people's nominee for City Attorney, upon the official ballot was quickly followed by an order of mandamus from the court. That settled it. Another order followed, directing all election officers to allow said Walter Marchand representation upon each official board at every voting precinct in the city. It was the people's ticket, and the people demanded that they have a "free ballot and a fair count." The District Court granted the demand, and that clinched the matter. There was no way now for the ring bosses to defeat the will of the people, and they knew it. The people also knew it.

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The election was over, and "the people" were victorious beyond their wildest anticipations and dreams. Marchand, as sanguine as he had been, was confused at his overwhelming majority. Nothing like it had ever before occurred in that city. "Marchand and honest government" had won a great victory in the first battle of the people.

A MORAL AWAKENING

CHAPTER XIII.

A MORAL AWAKENING.

The election of Walter Marchand by such an astounding majority was but the beginning of a moral wave that for a time swept over the whole country. It was a revival of those periods when the people rule. Municipal and state government had fallen into the hands of the few, and was no longer the government of the people.

The "New South" had but begun to take on the energy of a commercialism she had not experienced before. The people were busy with the loom, the factory and the shop. New railroads were pointing their noses in the direction of the Gulf of Mexico, and an era of commercialism had taken hold of the people. New men, new enterprises, new industries, and new money were seeking homes, locations, employment. A new order of things was adjusting itself, replacing the old habits, modes and customs. During this period of change, the people forgot government, and forgot their duty as integral parts of the government. Many there were who knew that a day of awakening would sooner or later come. They knew that when the municipality or the state is turned over to the few, there soon develops a feeling that the "few" own the government. The small official coterie becomes corrupt, and as the corruption grows aggressive, patriotism goes into

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decline. When corruption once seizes hold upon the government of the municipality, state or nation, the people are to blame, for the government is of, for and by the people; and if the corruption is to be eradicated, the people alone can accomplish that end. Never can this be done, however, until the individual citizen realizes and appreciates the duty he owes to his city, state and nation, as a component part of the government thereof.

Young Marchand was now looked upon as the great and growing leader of the people in their battle against corruption in public office. Many were the letters and messages of congratulation received by the young leader from all over the state.

"What does all this mean?" Asked the young attorney of the elder Marchand, one morning when his mail was heavier than usual. "Do you really believe there is as much corruption in our public offices as would seem to appear from the contents of all these letters?"

"Perhaps not," answered the father. "There seems to be a lull in the business world just now, and the people are taking the time to observe the manipulation of government. It is only a case of history repeating itself. Your public rebuke of the people happened at the proper time. Had you done that two years ago, you would have been driven out of town, scorned and derided."

"But, father, I merely told the truth. A matter of a short space of time does not transform a vice into a virtue."

"No, certainly not. Public sentiment in politics, however, is the all-ruling and governing power, and while a few citizens may be aware of the existence of political and

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official corruption, it requires a public sentiment, backed by the votes of the people, to eradicate the evil."

"Oh, I see," returned Walter. "But what about the individual duty of the citizen or officer, when he knows that this corruption exists?"

"Well, that is a matter of individual conscience, I suppose. Occasionally, a citizen or an honest official tries his hand at the 'cleaning up' process, and if public sentiment upon the subject be not ripe, the citizen or the officer tires of the attempt, becomes disgusted and falls back into the rut. The laws, then, remain dead letters, while official corruption runs riot until there is such an awakening among the people as will back up the citizen or the officer in his herculean efforts. Then it becomes a moral revolution, and the people see how they have been plundered. They witness the rottenness in all its intensity and energy, from one end of the country to the other. They awaken to the fact that there have grown up certain classes especially favored and especially privileged under the laws, and by the officers elected to execute and enforce the laws. They pass, as it were, from a period of sordid, selfish commerce into a temporary period of high ideals and high political standards, only to relapse again, for a period, into a political comatose state, that pillage and plunder may again grow rife. So it is, my boy, and so has it been since this republic was founded."

"The people, then, deserve just what they get," eagerly replied the younger man, his face flushing with the energy of youth.

"Yes, I suppose so, since the government is of and by the people. Don't you remember your statement that 'an honest government must be backed up by an honest people?'"

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"Yes, and that is true. But the people, as a rule, are honest, and want honest government. Do you not think so?"

"That is no doubt true, as a general proposition, so long as you apply it to 'the majority' of the people. Usually, 'the majority' of the people that want honest government are not the ones who seek 'special favors,' special privileges, for the 'majority' comprise the common people, the employed, the man without a business of his own. The men of large business, large means, corporations, trusts and combines also want honest government, but if their interests may be favored in any manner at the expense of government, they certainly prefer that. Of course, that may appear selfish, and perhaps it is."

"Well, father, when it comes down to human selfishness, I can not see that the fellow with small means, or the man without any means at all has any advantage over the man with large means. Certainly, I made no such discovery in my late campaign for City Attorney. Most assuredly I met people of both classes that were equally anxious to greatly assist and use their influence in my behalf, all for varied amounts and considerations."

"Oh, well, my son, you have a great deal to learn along these lines, if you would remain in public life. It is a great study, and many smart men have given their lives to it, only to die disappointed and broken hearted in the end."

"What we need to perpetuate good, honest government are men with civic pride and downright patriotism. Men with a patriotism who, if need be, would give up their lives for their city or state. There is as much patriotism in devoting one's life to bettering the government by eradicating the evil, electing good men, and purifying the ballot as there

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is in baring one's breast in battle to the fire of his country's enemy."

"That is true, my son, and I am proud to know that, since you appear to have been selected as the standard bearer of the people, in their present battle against corruption, you have the honesty, the integrity and the native Marchand courage to withstand any onslaught that may be made upon you. Look out for it, my son, it will come. You will be subjected to all sorts of intrigue, perhaps death."

"Well," laughed Walter, "I will be a patriot in that event."

"Patriots are generally dead. Everybody loves dead patriots, while the live ones have the most bitter enemies. You have entered upon a hard road, my son, and you must not expect easy traveling if you would reach the goal you seek, or accomplish what the people expect of you. Of all the bitter curses upon this earth, man's inhumanity to man is the most bitter, and men in public life realize that fact more than any other class."

"Certainly, father, you must have had some political disappointment in your lifetime, else you would not paint such lurid pictures."

"No, I never was even a candidate for a public office in my life. True, I have been disappointed in some of my friends who have been in public life. Sometimes I was not as honest with them, as officials and public servants, as I should have been, but I presume I was not different, in that respect, from others," said Mr. Marchand with a smile.

"That is the trouble with our system of government. If all of the people would be honest there would be little opportunity for the dishonesty of the officer. You, no doubt, as an attorney for some client, sought favors or special privileges

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and, while others may have succeeded, you possibly failed, hence your dissatisfaction with the officer. Why were you selected as the 'go-between'?—Because of your friendship with the officer, no doubt. In that, you were merely a tool, an instrument, and we might say, 'the hired assassin.' It was wrong. Your employer knew that it was wrong, and you knew it was wrong. Had the officer done your bidding, he would have deserved the least blame of any of you, but he would have been looked upon as the culprit and would have been spurned by the people."

The conversation between the father and son was interrupted by the appearance of Joe Butler, their mutual friend, and the publisher of The Daily Telegram.

"Pardon me, my friends. Let me first make it plain that I did not come here seeking a job for myself or for any other person. You have had several applications already, Walter?"

"Oh, a few," replied Walter with a knowing smile.

"Well, don't be surprised if you have a few hundred in the next few days," returned Butler. "If I can be of any service to you, do not hesitate to command me. I am glad I find both of you present, as I have a business proposition to present, and a matter in which both might become interested. The question of incorporating The Daily Telegram has been suggested by the owners, and in that connection, it has been suggested that both of you gentlemen should become stockholders. What do you think about it?" queried Butler, looking directly at the younger Marchand.

"Is the plant operating at a loss or a profit, and what are its future prospects?" inquired Walter.

"When I took charge of the plant it was worth little, as

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you know, but the present patronage is making it a paying concern. The present owners believe that by incorporating and distributing the stock among certain business men and officials, the future of the plant would be certain. So far as the legal business of perfecting the organization, preparing and procuring the charter is concerned, I desired to turn that into the hands of this firm, and that is my mission here now. As to the question of stock subscription, I have nothing to say, except that the parties interested seemed anxious that the new City Attorney should own a nice block of stock in the company."

The elder Marchand having been partially engaged with some papers upon his desk, smiled as the son quickly replied to Butler's last statement.

"Why do you people want the new City Attorney to become a stockholder? Certainly, that office will distribute considerable advertising, but it will be done upon purely business principles while I shall control it. Were I a stockholder in one of the concerns bidding for the business, I might at first unconsciously favor that concern. Later, I might do it wilfully. That would be wrong. Most assuredly, the people would not look favorably upon the proposition. In fact, I do not look favorably upon it, since I come to think it over. I speak for myself only, however."

"Well, Walter, I think you are right," Butler replied. "Uncompromising honesty is a good asset, and a characteristic that is too frequently lacking in the official world. True, it is not always an easy matter to practice it, I suppose, but as you have thus begun, you will grow stronger in your power to discern and overcome the evil that lies before you."

"Do you suppose the parties you represent in this matter

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designed that, by having an interest in their plant, I would use my office to advance that interest?"

"I suppose they had in mind the idea of combining such forces as would likely attract business to the new organization. That would be natural in the organization of any business concern."

"You seem to have drawn considerable patronage away from the Clarion and the Trumpet, recently," remarked the elder Marchand. "I suppose you will be more or less drawn into the continuous newspaper harangue, will you not?"

"No," said Butler. "I never knew anything to be gained by that kind of business. It hurts a town, and it's disgusting to all peace-loving citizens of a community. By the way, Colonel Marchand, when will it suit you to meet with us to arrange for the incorporation. I can arrange for it this evening if convenient for you. We will meet in my office."

"That will suit me to a nicety, as I want to leave the city for some time, by Sunday. Let me see—today is Wednesday. Yes, that will give me time to complete the matter. By the way, Butler, I may as well tell you, since you are a close friend of Walter's, that I am about to enter the field of matrimony, but this news is not for publication. Don't forget that fact."

"The secret shall be well guarded, Colonel," said Butler, slyly winking at Walter.

"Why, father, Mr. Butler had guessed the truth before you really obtained your full consent to marry," laughingly interjected Walter, returning Butler's jovial wink.

"Ah, you young rascals always think you know a heap more than you really do," responded Mr. Marchand, in a

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good-natured manner, "but it takes more experience than either of you have to keep up with us older fellows."

"That's what it does, Colonel. Now, I'll be going, and will arrange the meeting for this evening," said Butler, as he turned to leave.

"Say, Butler," cautioned Mr. Marchand, "that bit of news is to be a secret. My marriage, you know."

"Oh, not for the world, Colonel. Good day," returned Butler, as he passed out of the inner office, leaving the father and son alone together.

"That fellow Butler is a sharp, shrewd man," remarked the elder Marchand, "and I am glad he is your friend, Walter."

"Better than all, I think he is honest and upright," said Walter in reply, "that is, in all his dealings with me. I have the utmost confidence in his integrity and friendship."

"Yes, so long as he is your friend. But, Walter, remember that in politics the friend of today may be the enemy of tomorrow. A little caution, taken in broken doses, and mixed well with the friendship of not only Butler, but every other person, may sometimes serve you well and prevent a broken heart over a case of love-at-first-sight, in politics."

"That is all right, father, but Joe and I were old school boys together—college chums, you know."

"Yes, my son, I know all about the 'schoolmate' and 'college chum' friend, but simply speak for your good, generally. By the way, have you heard from Edith recently? I wonder how my letter was received by my intended."

"Oh, finely. Here is Edith's letter. I received it this morning. You may read it," said Walter, handing the letter to the elder gentleman.

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The writer spoke of the joy and delight that both letters had given the two anxious inquirers. That the present month would end their stay at the old college town, and that both were laying great plans for their future happiness that was sure to await them in the old home, "The Cedars."

After Mr. Marchand had read the letter, he remarked:

"Well, my boy, there's going to be a new life for me, after all these weary years. I am really anxious to be off, and I can hardly wait for Sunday to come, when I am to depart. The days will seem like weeks to me until I see my daughter Edith, and—"

"And—, and—, and—," teasingly interjected Walter.

"Yes, yes, you understand, of course, Mrs. Olcott, or Mrs. Marchand to be," rejoined the father, with a pleasing smile.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A CONTENTED FAMILY.

"The Cedars" is, once more, the home of an unbroken, happy, very happy family. The charming Mrs. Olcott, that was, is now the sweet and gentle mistress of the beautiful old homestead. Surrounded by those who loved her with an unerring love; who lavished upon her their warmest affections; who vied with each other in exhibiting the highest esteem for her, and their appreciation of her noble character, Mrs. Marchand was, indeed, a truly happy woman. She was now enjoying a happiness of which she had, in the past, only hoped for but had not known. No dreadful nightmare of doubt and fear was to shadow her life now. Henceforth she would enjoy one prolonged dream of peace and rest. What a recompense after all the years of toil, worry, doubt, misgivings and fear. What a haven—what a happy deliverance from the bondage of the past.

The master of the home was a happy, contented man. He had known domestic bliss in the years gone by, but it was a happiness with which was coupled a longing, toiling for the future. Not so, his present joy, for he had reached the goal. Now, he basked in the sunshine of contentment. Now, he looked down over life's decline and beheld the beautiful valleys waving with the ripened grain. His plough-

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ing and sowing over—the harvest lay in rich expanse before him. He had sown good seed and felt assured of the fruits of the harvest. Ah, what a sense of restfulness came to him now, as he stood, as it were, upon the summit of life's journey. Back of him, a path of honest, honorable and righteous conduct. Before him, a broad, rich expanse, sloping gently into the mystic Jordan, a seemingly dividing line, where the mortal voice whispers "farewell," then joins in the eternal Hallelujah chorus upon the farther shore. He was satisfied. His halcyon dreams of youth were more than realized in his supreme domestic happiness. Kind, loving and affectionate, the master of "The Cedars" was dearly beloved, honored and revered by the members of his household. He was content.

Nothing more could man and wife ask for, than had Mr. and Mrs. Marchand, to make their lives happy. Theirs was all, and more if possible, that poets had ever sung or written of "Home." It was the hearthstone of their affections, the altar of their communings, the shield of their noonday lives, the refuge of their declining days. Happy retreat, sacred temple, home, sweet home.

Edith, like a rosebud with petals gently unfolding, disclosing a deeper, richer shade of coloring, was now blooming into a rare, sweet and ripened womanhood. Her long and constant association with the matronly Mrs. Olcott tended, in a great measure, to earlier mature her natural graces and queenly manners. Edith Marchand was more than a queen; she was a typical American girl with the characteristics, manners and charms of the "first ladies" of the "Old South." Her return to her home, and the home of her ancestors for nearly a century, served to bring back

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to memory the early history of "The Cedars." Upon the walls of the old home hung the portraits of the Marchand family for several generations, some of them bearing the French coat of arms, thereby evidencing the fact that the Marchands, in the olden days, had high rank in the royalty of the French government. As a matter of family lineage, Edith took great pride in this royal connection. Not that she desired to assume a semi-regal status. Not at all. Edith was not in the least disposed to appear as being other than she in fact was. She was not vain nor puffed up with false pride. Edith loved her home and her family above all else in the world. For the baubles of society she cared little. An accomplished musician, she was much sought after at all social functions, but held herself in queenly reserve. Many were the admirers who sought the friendship and society of the charming young lady, and all found an insurmountable barrier at a certain stage. Some of them fawned and dawdled at her feet, as it were, only to be brushed aside as so many pesky flies. The usual silly, idle, gossipy twaddle, found no abiding place with Edith. The insincere, deceptive, painstaking hypocrisy, sometimes practiced by over-zealous worshippers at Cupid's shrine, was all lost on Edith Marchand. She despised hypocrisy; ignored flattery; spurned insincerity. She was a woman.

Edith Marchand was a regular attendant of the church services, but was not a member of any church. If a neighbor became sick, Edith Marchand was always depended upon to render whatever services were within her power. In sickness and distress, Edith became the one ministering angel of the neighborhood. If death came to the family of a friend, Edith was there to comfort, cheer and point out the bright

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way to those in the darkness of their sorrow. Upon her face was a constant radiance, the reflection of the pure, spotless soul within. Her ministerings were not coupled with red lanterns nor pulpit advertisements. On her tours of charity and mercy, she was never accompanied by a newspaper reporter nor a brass band. She typified the true, the beautiful, and the good. She was a Christian.

No brother was ever happier than was Walter Marchand, now that Edith was permanently at home. The charming companionship of their younger days had lost none of its sweetness by the flight of years. The brilliancy of the social swirl could not distract it. The glamour of popular society or political distinction could not lure it. The strenuous activity of the business world could not weaken it. It was unmovable, it was firm, it was fixed. The companionship of brother and sister was often the subject of social gossip, especially among those whose ambitions had not been gratified by being permitted to break into the family circle of "The Cedars." To those, the comradeship of the brother and sister was "downright selfishness" and a challenge to the "quality" of the social circles of the city's "best citizens." The brother and sister expected the world would gossip, but little cared they. The father and mother were, unto themselves, all sufficient, and heeded little the doings of the social world. The brother and sister often wondered at the marvelous love they each bore the other, but it gave them no great concern. It was a striking coincidence, but it was not alarming. They had not even dreamed of a secret cause for this wonderful, or rather, unordinary situation. If there were a secret cause, they were not expected to know the secret. The mother, being a stranger to the family

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history and family connections, was, of course, not cognizant of the secret, if any there were. The father, the only one who did know, had resolved that it should remain as in the past. He, alone, did not wonder nor marvel at the strange and intense love between his son and daughter. He did wonder, however, at the growing affection of the wife for his son Walter. There was no apparent cause, that is, there was no cause other than an affectionate nature with which both were endowed. But Edith was not different in that respect. The father could not but feel an unspeakable gratification that his household was one of peace, love and affection. He could not wish it otherwise—not quite. Just a little speck had risen away out on the horizon, but it would pass by, perhaps.

"The Cedars" was a happy little world within itself. Each member of the household bore upon his countenance the radiance of peace and contentment. The music of the fireside was never marred by a discordant sound. Every word breathed a note of melody, and every response a whisper of love. Every going out carried with it a God speed, and every coming in was hailed with a joyous greeting. Such was the home life of the little family at "The Cedars."

So pleasant and agreeable was the home life of young Walter Marchand that it had, in a measure, lured him from his official duties. The father had, recently, intimated to the son the necessity of close application to the business of his public office, but not until the suggestion was followed by a similar one from Joe Butler, was it of any avail. Then the young man pondered, examined himself, and recognized the value of the suggestion. True, he had begun to drift into a semi-carelessness that would, in time, leave a telling effect

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upon his official conduct. That could not be permitted under any circumstances. He had promised the people faithful attention to the business of the office. He must conscientiously perform his duties, thereby making good his promises to the people. There could be no excuse for an officer's neglect of public duty, except sickness or extreme misfortune. He had suffered neither. One course alone was left for him to pursue. He was young, energetic, honest, and had the confidence of the people. He would, therefore, shut his eyes to all the world, except the vigorous prosecution of the business of the office which he held. Those duties he would perform with justice and impartiality, let come what may. His own conscience would be clear, and he, at least, would have the satisfaction of having performed his duty well.

Yes, he would do more. He would make a study of the political system of the whole country. He would learn the ways of government, the moving powers, the trend of development.

Not that he had been entirely blind to the recent revolution of commercial activity in the South. Not at all. He had acquainted himself with her history, and had witnessed the slow approach of the tide of improvement. He had also observed the slowly changing checker board of commerce, indicated by the building of North and South lines of railroad; the appropriations by the national government for the improvement of streams, harbors and ports along the Gulf of Mexico; the renewed agitation for the construction of an Isthmian canal. Over in Texas arose the agitation of reciprocity and the extension of American commerce with Latin-America. Europe controlled ninety per cent of the

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trade of Latin-America, while the United States, a sister republic, within a stone's throw, was permitted the poor privilege of controlling but ten per cent of that trade. Already the people of Texas had discovered the cause and were promoting the establishment of a "Pan-American College of Commerce." These matters would become a subject of interesting research and study for the young "politician."

What meant the increased investment of northern and eastern money in new business enterprises, in new and permanent developments, and in various lines of trade and business? It meant something, and young Marchand would ferret out the meaning. He would awake from the dreams of the past, buckle on his armor, and stride out over the busy world like a great Goliath. He would not be a laggard in the performance of the duties that devolved upon him, whether they be official or private duties. In the new life that was now dawning upon him he beheld visions of a great, throbbing, pulsing theater of action, in which he had, theretofore, played but a small part. Not so for the future. A new day had dawned upon him. The instability of youth was succeeded by the strength and soberness of manhood. The day of insecurity and instability had passed. With the strength of a Sampson he would burst his fetters and be a free man. The awakening had come.

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CHAPTER XV.

OFFICIAL INTEGRITY.

The machinery of the City Attorney's office now began to run briskly and, albeit, more smoothly. The office force became aware, without being told, that thenceforward there would be no lagging nor holding back, but that the office would be run on business principles.

Walter Marchand was the same genial, affable, pleasant fellow as before, but firm. He did not assume an arrogant nor over important mein, as the chief and head of the department, but it was generally understood that he intended to hold the reins in his own hands and do the driving. That was necessary in order to prevent accidents and side excursions. He had not only the business of his office to care for, but the ill-feeling of some of the city officials to contend with. They were of the old factions, and he expected them to obstruct the business of the legal department, if possible. He was not far wrong in his surmises. He was an interloper, according to the opinion of the official ring, and his official path should be made as rough as possible. Again, his enemies reasoned without their host. They misjudged their man. They trod upon dangerous ground. They camped over a mine of explosives.

All was quiet "along the Potomac" now, but there was

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a storm brewing. It would, sooner or later, burst over the city in all its fury, leaving a trail of political wrecks in its wake. The "storm king" was already growling in his lair, but he would, later, arouse himself, stretch his loins, and stalk forth with a bellow and roar, that would cause the very foundations of the city to rock and tremble. The preceding calm was on now. The elements had not gathered their full quota of storm substance, but the barometer was marking the effect. The knowing ones, only, could read the barometer aright. They, and they only, knew that the oncoming gale would sweep the decks and shatter the rotten timbers of the old ship of state.

It was not strange, at least Marchand did not think it strange, that some of his colleagues in office, whom he knew were his bitter enemies, should suddenly become solicitous about the city's welfare. They had heard, no doubt, the low rumbling of the storm in the distance. He treated them with official courtesy, but would not kiss their hands. Their fawning around him failed to win his "good graces." They had had their day, and he proposed to have his, but he made no such announcement, as yet. It had not reached that stage.

The finances of the city were in bad shape. The city was hopelessly embarrassed, and its script was hawked about the streets, barely bringing fifty cents on the dollar. The city laborers and employes were on the verge of despair. The Mayor and Council could offer no relief, except to officially demand of the City Attorney that the back tax suits be vigorously reduced to available assets. The blame rested upon the legal department. The City Attorney was not unprepared for this move on the part of the ring. He expected it and was waiting for it. He did not openly resent

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the unjust accusations. He acted, however, and acted promptly. He demanded of the City Tax Collector a correct and duly certified statement of all back taxes due to the city by the Mayor and each of the aldermen. It was refused by that worthy official. He knew it would be, but he was prepared for that emergency. The books had been quietly examined by his deputy and a transcript duly prepared, except it lacked the signature of the collector. These transcripts were presented for official certificate, but the officer again refused. That also was expected, but the legal department was not at its wits end. There was a remedy.

The council was to convene in regular session the following day and it had been noised about that it would likely take some action with relation to the "dilatatory tactics of the legal department." The Daily Trumpet never failed to cast insinuations at, and try to belittle the legal department. The Daily Trumpet "hoped the council would employ a lawyer to help run the legal department." The Daily Clarion, after the election, concluded to choose the saner part, and it tuned its notes to a more harmonious key. The Daily Telegram had little to say of the municipal situation. It was watching the brewing of the storm.

The council convened, and the chamber and galleries were filled with eager spectators, mostly of the friends of the old factions. The proceedings ran smoothly through the opening routine ceremonies, until the various "reports" by the several committees and departments had been heard.

"Any further reports?" asked the Mayor.

"No other reports on my desk," responded the clerk.

"Is it not about time the City Attorney made a report on

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the back tax suits?" said the Mayor, turning to Marchand, then added, in a rather sneering manner:

"We've been waiting on you a long time to push the back tax cases, and this Council will have to take some kind of action, I reckon."

Walter Marchand respectfully addressed the Honorable Mayor and Council, stating that he was ready to make report of his progress, but he preferred to report verbally, if permitted by the honorable body.

"We don't want verbal reports here, we want written reports so that they may be made a matter of record," returned the Mayor.

Alderman Jones of the Third Ward quickly arose, and suggested that a verbal report on progress always had been the rule in the Council, and that he could not understand why that rule should not apply in this case.

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen," interjected Marchand. "I have a written report, but I merely asked your kind indulgence that I might state it verbally with explanation, and perhaps some embellishments. It may be some of you will desire to ask questions, and I can the more readily answer them. Besides, as you will observe, the report is quite lengthy as it contains the description of property, the amount of back taxes due, and the names of the debtors."

"Now, I move that the gentleman be permitted to report verbally," said Alderman Jones. The motion was seconded by Alderman Smith of the Seventh, and upon vote was carried.

"Now, I reckon you can proceed, since it appears to suit the Council best," said the Mayor, petulantly.

"I thank you, gentlemen, and assure you that I greatly

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appreciate the courtesy," said Walter in his usual pleasant and courtly manner, while a ripple of applause ran along the gallery.

"My report is prefaced," said Walter, "with a statement of the condition in which I found the tax suit docket when I assumed the duties of the office, and may be explained thus:

"Seven thousand and ninety suits had been filed by my predecessors, and of that number eight hundred judgments had been rendered, and two hundred and seven executions had been issued under those judgments, while but seventy-three of those executions were ever made effective by either voluntary payment and satisfaction of the judgment, or by sale of the property thereunder. You may have observed that two dollars is allowed, by the ordinance, for the filing of each suit, and one per cent additional is allowed upon the face value of each judgment, as the attorney fee.

"The average amount sued for in these cases is eight dollars and eleven cents, including penalties, interest and costs of advertising, which would indicate that only the small property owner had been hauled up into court."

At this juncture a very decided and vigorous applause ran along the galleries and dropped down among the visitors on the main floor. A sense of uneasiness seemed to possess the Mayor and several of the aldermen.

"I don't see what all that history has got to do with your duties as the chief of the legal department. Let us have what you are doing. That is what we want to know," snarled the Mayor, as he twisted in his executive chair.

"Certainly, certainly," said Walter in a mild and pleasant voice. "I am coming to that part of the report now, with

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the exception of one other feature. Of the seventy-three effective executions, forty-seven ejections from homes were had. I have here the names of those who were ejected, and, as a matter of history, I will read them if this honorable body desires."

"We don't want them read. We don't care anything about them. What we want is money to run the government and pay off the poor city laborers," roared the Mayor, which was followed by a shadow of applause out in the hallway, with a feeble shout of "Dat's de stuff! Hurrah for de Mayor!"

"Very well," returned Walter, "I will omit reading the names as you prefer, and simply add, that of the forty-seven ejected families, nineteen of them were widows, and thirteen are now in almshouses and upon public charity at an average yearly expense to the city of eighty-seven dollars, each, or a total of eleven hundred and thirty-one dollars, while the total tax collected from the sale of their houses amounted to one hundred and four dollars, from which, if you deduct costs, fees, etc., will leave to the city about sixty-nine dollars. This amount, deducted from the annual cost of sustaining the paupers thereby created, leaves an annual loss to the city, by the transaction, of one thousand and sixty-two dollars, to say nothing of broken hearts and ruined lives, through this unwarranted and cruel proceeding. I now come to—"

The speaker was interrupted, and his voice drowned by the roar of applause in all parts of the room, except that portion within the railing which was set apart for the Council. There was no applause in that portion—it was as quiet as an injured husband, except for the squeaking of the alder-

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manic chairs as some of the occupants thereof nervously swung back and forth.

The Mayor rapped for order with his gavel, and the applause increased in volume. That enraged the Municipal Chief. It also enraged one or two of the aldermen who yelled for recognition by the Mayor. They wanted to try their hand at speech-making. The Mayor, filled with vexation, unable to restore order, recognized both of the anxious aldermen, but the audience did not. The Council was about to dissolve when Walter raised his hand in an appeal for silence, and the storm ceased as suddenly as it had done in the opera house at his command.

The Mayor, after lecturing the visitors, and warning them that another demonstration of that character would result in their ejection from the room, then turned in rage upon the young attorney, and said:

"You must understand, sir, that this is no place for moralists and preachers to whine and whimper about poor widows and beggars. We are here for business. Now if you have done anything for the city, out with it—tell us about it, but don't attempt any more of this tommy rot, for we shall not submit to it. Now proceed, if you have anything."

"I greatly appreciate this marked generosity on the part of the Executive and the Council," said Walter calmly, his face white with suppressed anger, "and as I shall not allow any contemptuous conduct on the part of others, either through fear, or for the purpose of punishment, to distract me in my present duty, I will now proceed. I was about to say, when interrupted, that no tax suits against poor people for dribbles or small amounts would be filed by my office



(FROM PHOTO BY J. MOODY DAWSON)

"I'LL SUE HIM TOMORROW FOR THAT MONEY."

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until the more wealthy, and the large property owners had either rendered justice to the city or had been compelled so to do. More than that, as the city fathers should hold themselves before the public as examples, each of them should pay his just debts to the city before forcing others to do so."

"We are not asking you for advice, nor a moral lecture, Mr. City Attorney," roared the Mayor.

"I understand, Mr. Mayor," quickly retorted Walter, "but from now on it will not be what you may ask for, but what is right and just before God and man, that shall govern my official conduct. I do not want to do an injustice to any person, and the way to do that is to do exact justice to everybody. It is but just and right that the official fathers of this city should pay their back taxes—every cent, and I shall see that they do it."

"Oh, you can't get a proper statement from the collector," squeaked the little, frizzly-bearded, bean-eyed alderman from the Eighth Ward, whose father was rated at a half million dollars, but whose assessed values were something like nineteen thousand. "No, sir; you can't get it, and of course, you can't sue us."

Hisses were heard in the galleries, the Mayor rapped for order, and the bean-eyed alderman from the Eighth Ward crouched down in his chair and chuckled to himself, while Walter ignored the remarks and proceeded:

"And now, I come to that part of my report which indicates the course I intend to pursue, and the way I am doing it. I find that there is due to this city, in back taxes, a sum estimated to be four hundred and sixteen thousand dollars. The amount heretofore sued for by the seventy-

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five hundred suits, is sixty thousand dollars, leaving a balance of three hundred and fifty-six thousand dollars for which suit is to be brought. It is estimated that a less number of suits will be required to collect this large balance than have heretofore been instituted for the small sum named.

"I have begun this work by filing suits against those persons who hold high offices in this city government. Even now, the deputy sheriff is at the door of this chamber for the purpose of serving citation upon those of our honorable official family who owe to this city, in back taxes, an aggregate amount of twenty-nine thousand, six hundred dollars—or more than sufficient to pay the 'poor city laborers,' as suggested by our Mayor, one hundred cents on the dollar for their hard earned wages. I hereby respectfully submit my written report and ask that it be filed, as a 'matter of record,' and in the mean time I trust you will give it due consideration."

The closing announcements of the City Attorney were received by the visitors and spectators with a storm of applause. It fell upon the ears of the city fathers like a deafening peal of thunder. As Walter Marchand handed the written report to the City Secretary, or clerk of the Council, and calmly took his seat, he felt that he did so under the scorching glare of his official brethren. He knew that most of them hated him with a keen, cutting, malicious hatred, the twin sister to murder, but that did not daunt his courage. He crossed his legs carelessly, drew a cigar from his vest pocket, clipped the end off with a pair of clippers, lighted it carelessly, and twirled the burning match away, as though he were at a base ball game. The burning match fell upon the floor near the feet of the Mayor. The Mayor

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kicked hatefully at the match and uttered an ugly grunt, something similar to an undomesticated Arkansas "razor-back." The audience tittered and giggled. That angered the Mayor.

"I beg your pardon," said Walter Marchand.

"My pardon be damned," roared the Mayor, and he jumped to his feet, gavel raised, which he brought down upon the desk with a crash that splintered the little mallet, as he proclaimed:

"This Council is adjourned, and you can all go home."

Joe Butler was instantly by the side of his friend Walter, and, thought not heard, was seen to take him by the arm as if requesting him to retire. They did retire, but it was by walking right down through the Council chamber, eyeing each alderman as they went, in a fearless, unconcerned manner. As they came to the door they met the deputy sheriff with his hands full of citations in suits against the city fathers for back taxes.

"Shall I serve these citations now, Mr. Marchand?" queried the officer.

"Certainly, and if you need help, I will be glad to aid you," returned Walter, while Joe Butler tugged at the strong young man's arm.

"No, thank you. I can manage the affair all right," replied the deputy. As the two friends stepped down upon the street, Butler remarked:

"You've played the very old mischief, Walter."

"How is that, Joe?"

"Why, confound it, you have now got every one of those city officials to fight, and they will fight you hard, too.

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They will throw every obstruction, possible, in the way of your official success."

"Well, have they not been doing that for a year, or ever since I took charge of the office? Have they not combined to lay all sorts of blame upon me? I had nothing to gain by peaceable means. Besides, I've got my duty to perform, and I intend to do it."

"That is all right about your duty, but there are several ways to do that. Besides, if you carry out your plans, several of the stockholders of my company, one of them especially, will lose ten thousand dollars."

"How is that, Joe?"

"Why, dad burn it, he owes the city that amount in back taxes, and more, too."

"Who is it—whom do you mean?"

"Why, John Pletcher, of course. He is the president of my company."

"All right, I'll sue him tomorrow for that money."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. You are going crazy."

"You are mistaken. I'm just going sane. It Pletcher owes this debt to the city and does not pay, it becomes my duty to bring suit against him."

"But, Walter, do you remember what the Telegram and Mr. Pletcher did for you in your election?"

"Yes, I think I do. They helped to elect me. I was running on a platform of 'honest government.' It was my platform which the people voted for, not me. If Pletcher and the Telegram wanted honest government then, why 'crawfish' now? No, sir; I intend to make Pletcher toe the mark."

"If you can not appreciate his services, can you not rec-

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ognize my friendship? We have always been friends—were 'college chums.' Have I no claim upon our friendship?"

"Certainly. But if, by that, you mean that our friendship shall sway me one iota from the faithful discharge of my official duty, you have calculated by the wrong rule."

"But, friend Walter, you will place yourself and your father in an unenviable light before the people if you pursue this policy."

"How is that?"

"Well, your father owes several hundred dollars back taxes."

"How do you know he does?"

"Because, I've investigated the books and found it so."

"Well, if that is so, he must be among the very first ones to pay up. If he does not do so voluntarily, I shall file suit against him."

"Would you be so insanely honest as to do a thing like that?"

"I should be sanely dishonest if I did not do just that very thing."

"Walter Marchand, you are wholly incorrigible, and I give you over. I think after you have a talk with your father and sister, you may possibly see wherein you are rapidly 'going to the bad.'"

"Oh, by the way, Joe, you must go with me to dinner. I faithfully promised Edith that I would bring you this evening, and they will expect you."

"It is very kind of you, I am sure, but—"

"But nothing—no excuses today, please. I will drop by your office on my way home and pick you up. So long."

"Adios."

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CHAPTER XVI.

A HOLY INSPIRATION.

Though warm friends, and very closely in touch with each other in business and political matters, Joe Butler and Walter Marchand had devoted themselves but little to social pleasures. At least Butler had not been as frequent a visitor at "The Cedars" as one would have surmised. Of course, he was a friend of the family, and had occasionally been an invited guest, courteously received and royally entertained, but that was all. True, he had, on several occasions, joined Walter and Edith at theater parties and social functions, but that was no greater pleasure than other young men enjoyed.

Butler was an energetic, industrious man, always apparently engaged or absorbed with his business affairs, yet he was, withal, of a social turn and greatly enjoyed the society of his friends. He was an ardent but silent admirer of Edith Marchand. He was aware of the constancy of the affection between brother and sister, and was equally cognizant that it was an unordinary affair. To Joe Butler it was a mystery, but not more so to him than it was to other equally close friends of the family.

Butler may have imagined that his friend Walter was not overly anxious that Edith should encourage any particular feeling of friendship that, perchance, might arise among her

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friends for her. Not that there had occurred any such manifestation, but it might be expected that, with such constant companions, such "college chums," such close business and political friends, there would have been a closer, social intimacy between Butler and the other members of Walter Marchand's family. These chance suggestions presented themselves to Butler as rambling thoughts, and for the moment left a tinge of bitterness. But it passed away as Walter Marchand entered Butler's office and jovially exclaimed:

"Come on, old boy; Edith is waiting in the carriage for us. We will go with her."

"All right, Walt. I guess there is nothing for me to do but come along, even though I'm in mighty poor attire. Suppose you and Miss Edith precede me, and I will go by my room and 'make up' a little."

"We'll do nothing of the sort. Your apparel is better than my own, besides, this is to be no swell social affair—just a little home party, and you the only guest. Come," and taking Butler by the arm enforced his command in a friendly manner. Of course, Edith was delighted to have Butler with them, so she said, and Edith never prevaricated, not even for "social" purposes. The trio of friends talked and laughed on their way to "The Cedars" with such jolly good fellowship and abandon, that whatever restraint Butler may have theretofore felt or manifested had now disappeared.

The Marchands were a hospitable family. Edith was a queenly entertainer, but not more so than was Mrs. Marchand. They had the happy faculty of making their guests feel perfectly welcome, perfectly at home. That was be-

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cause there was no undercurrent of formal insincerity nor upper layer of mock sincerity. Their guests basked in the warm sunshine of honest good fellowship. If unwelcome guests, and that seldom occurred, they were not regaled with the usual, "Simply delighted," "Glad you called," "Charmed with your company," and other apparently necessary "social extravaganzas."

Butler was 'a welcome guest, and, if he had ever ventured a doubt upon that fact in the past, he now felt assured of his status. He had often felt that lean, lank, hungering desire for the comforts of a home and loved ones. Never before had he felt it so intensely as now. Poor devil! He was adrift upon life's tempestuous sea, with none to love him for his noble worth; without a tender hand to temper his fevered brow; without a gentle voice to soothe his aching brain; without a loving soul to join with his in sweet commune.

To him, how charming, how sweet, how beautiful, how godly were the gentle words and the queenly movements of Edith and Mrs. Marchand in that dear old home on this occasion. What exchange price would he have offered, were the world his own to give, for a permanent place in that happy, peaceful, contented family. No amount of money, no degree of self-sacrifice would be too great a compensation. There had been days when he knew the peace and tranquility of home and loved ones. He had tasted the sweet nectar of a wife's ruby lips. His ears had tingled with a child's simple prattle. His soul had leaped at the tiny lisping of a babe's "pa, pa." But that was all no more, forever. The sweet nectar had passed, the simple prattle had ceased, the tiny lisping were dumb. The cruel grave had

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swallowed all, and with it all, the heart, the life, the soul of Joe Butler.

But he would not let his poignant sorrow cast an outward reflection of the raging storm within. That would not do. The world should not know. It should not mock at his grief nor rejoice at his sorrow, if indeed, such were the possibilities. Bright must be his days, joyful his nights, so far as the world was concerned. And so, Joe Butler made his life appear, but he did it under the stress of daily renewed resolutions.

No one of the little quintette was apparently more gay or lively on the occasion in question than was the guest, Joe Butler. He parried and sallied in the duel of wit, as gracefully as a French nobleman wields the sword in defense of honor. He advanced and retreated, in the battle of mirth, as strategically as a column of infantry under the direction of an experienced commander. Socially, he was interesting; mentally, he was inspiring. As the evening faded into night, the conversation and discussion drifted from one subject to another, until music, nature, books, authors, men, and other matters had received their just share of comment and criticism. And finally, by the mysterious hand of that mistress, the "Association of Thought and Idea," the little party was unconsciously led to the discussion of governmental affairs which, in common parlance, is usually termed "politics." In that, Joe Butler was equally at home. Walter's experience of more than a year had certainly elevated him above the ranks of the novice, while Mr. Marchand was the "sage" of the little party, though mostly silent. Edith and Mrs. Marchand were the novices, though anxious pupils in the science. After some discussion between Walter and Butler

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on the "general principles" of government, Edith interrupted their dialogue by saying:

"Why do you not come down to the plane of current local politics, that all of us may understand. These high sounding terms which you two gentlemen have been employing make it difficult for us women to understand, and of course you know a woman is always interested in the affairs of her friends, even though they be political affairs."

"Or political friends?" queried Butler."

"Oh, yes, most certainly," returned Edith, "including the friends of political relatives."

"Now, Butler, that will hold you for a while," exclaimed Walter, laughingly.

"Speaking of political friends," said Butler, "I am sometimes constrained to think that the term is a misnomer. That as a rule in politics, there exists no such thing as political friendship."

"Oh, Mr. Butler, how can you say that, when you witnessed the rousing demonstration of the people, and the magnificent majority they gave brother Walter in his race," said Edith.

"Walter reminded me this evening that it was not himself, personally, but his platform of honest government that the people battled for, and I have about concluded he is right."

"Well, but did not his opponent shout 'honest government' also, and he was defeated. Certainly the friends that so strongly supported Walter in his election are still, and will continue to be his friends, so long as he does his duty."

"I am very doubtful whether all of them may be depended upon. You see so many people have grown to believe that, if they do anything to help elect a man to office, they thereafter

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have a claim of some kind or other upon him, and frequently the occasion arises that their supposed claim on his friendship is pressed. Sometimes the claim can be conscientiously recognized by the officer, without the betrayal of a trust, and sometimes it can not. If the officer, whether conscientiously or otherwise, does not grant the favor, he has thereby made a political enemy."

"Taking the last phrase of your statement, 'political enemy,' contradicts your first proposition, for it must find its opposite in the 'political friend,'" rejoined Edith, interestedly.

"Of course, Miss Edith, every rule has its exception; every vice, its counterpart; and every virtue, its opposite. But in politics you can not as a rule include the virtue or characteristic of constancy. The political friend of today has combined with the opposition tomorrow. It may be for selfish reasons only, and selfish reasons may mean a thousand different things."

"Pardon me for the interruption," said Mr. Marchand, who had just been in conversation with some one over the telephone, "but Mr. Pletcher would like to speak with Mr. Butler for a moment."

During the time Butler was at the 'phone, the conversation consisted of brief expressions and argument, pro and con, over the discussion just had on the question of political constancy. Upon Butler's return, Walter suggested:

"I trust your friend has not grown restless over the back tax situation, Butler."

"No, not exactly restless, but he would like a consultation with us in the morning, if you can arrange your affairs to give us the time.

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"Why, certainly, I'll be glad to do so."

"What is all this trouble about the back taxes, anyway, Mr. Butler? I do not understand it," said Edith.

"Well, as I understand, a great many people have, through one cause or another, failed to pay their taxes for years and years. Some of them failed to assess a part, or all of their property, from time to time, and naturally the taxes were not regularly paid, leaving a large total amount of taxes now due the city for those years, extending back for the last quarter of a century."

"Why did not the city officers collect those taxes year by year as they fell due instead of letting it drag along in that manner?" queried Edith.

"I do not know," answered Butler, "but perhaps Mr. Marchand does, he having lived here all the time."

"Well," began the sage of the little party, "there are several reasons that might be assigned for the apparent laxity in the collection of the taxes during those years. You will readily understand that during the war there was mighty little effort or opportunity on the part of our citizens to maintain anything like a regular form of city government, except during the prolonged visit of General Benjamin Butler. It has been said since, that even his efforts to maintain a form of government were not thoroughly appreciated by our people at that time. My impression is, however, that his having thoroughly renovated the city of filth and dirt was, as a sanitary measure, the greatest blessing that could have been bestowed. It was also an object lesson in the conduct of municipal government, but a lesson which seems, likewise, not to have been appreciated by our people, since we must

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always wait for frost to dispel our epidemics instead of preventing epidemics by and through sanitary measures.

"But our people were discouraged by the results of the war, and they were afterward called upon to pass through even greater struggles than the war itself. Consequently, they dragged along half heartedly for a long period of years, paying little attention to local government, except to see that the government itself was not wholly turned over to an inferior and ignorant race of recently made citizens. So it was that in many instances property was not assessed, and taxes not collected, or, if done at all, done in a careless and neglectful manner. In these later years, with new life, new hopes, new methods and new inspirations, we view the past and discover the errors and irregularities, but, to us of the old school, they are, many of them, entirely excusable."

"I had never thought of it in that way," said Walter, "I can readily appreciate how the system of laxity originated after the war, but can not find excuse for its continuation, indefinitely. It has swamped and killed all civic pride, especially in those who persist in the practice of 'dodging taxes.' An examination of the records will disclose the fact that the extremely wealthy citizens have been guilty of 'tax dodging,' far in excess of the less wealthy. But that is not the worst feature of this system of official negligence. In hundreds of cases where the records show non-payment of taxes, the property owners hold good and valid tax receipts, showing that they had paid the taxes."

"How can that be—how can you account for that?" inquired Edith.

"Well, I don't account for it," answered Walter, "but I intend that the Grand Jury shall investigate the matter. I

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believe our mutual friend, Mr. Pletcher, was a former Tax Collector, was he not, father?"

"Yes, Mr. Pletcher held that office about ten years ago. He was afterwards elected Mayor and was always considered one of the very best officers."

"I have in my office some tax receipts signed by him as collector, that——"

"Let us not discuss the subject further at this time," interrupted Mr. Marchand. "I see it is not interesting to our lady folks."

"Oh, yes it is, father," rejoined Edith. "I like to learn of the means and methods you men adopt to defeat the will of the people. It is quite interesting, I am sure, only I can not understand the motive for it all."

"Motive!" laughingly exclaimed Butler. "Oh, the jingling of the guinea, I suppose."

"Oh, you selfish, selfish men. And we women have to drag ourselves through mud and water, where there ought to be good sidewalks and paved streets, just on account of the wrongful management of municipal government by you sordid, selfish men. It is really shameful."

"Certainly you are not in earnest, Edith. Surely you have not taken the situation so seriously," said Mr. Marchand.

"Indeed, I am in earnest. I have not overlooked the thrusts and cuts at brother Walter by those old newspapers. I've read between the lines. There is good cause for their perturbation and fear. I do hope Walter will not let up until he drags the old skeletons out to the public gaze."

"Well, he made a good start at it today," said Butler, "and

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I fear I shall have to report it truthfully as it was, however much it would be preferable not to do so."

"Why preferable not to report it, Mr. Butler?" asked Edith with feeling. "Is not the Telegram still willing to battle for honest government? Is not the paper, and also its manager, both friends of Walter? Why, what reason could you now assign for not aiding and assisting my brother in his heroic struggle for honest government? Why should those who helped to elect him grow weary now, just when his labors are about to bear fruit?"

Thus spoke Edith, and as she spoke the color rose to her cheeks, and her eyes sparkled as they gazed into the eyes of Joe Butler.

He had thought her sweet and beautiful before, but, as she spoke, her face, her eyes lit up with the holy fires radiating from within her very soul, and she appeared to him ten-fold more beautiful. He saw her in a new light. Before, he felt her powerful influence over him. Now, he would be her slave forever, if she would but ask it. For a moment, Butler was bewildered by the brightness, the beauty of her eyes. He felt an effect similar to the tingle of electricity passing through his body, or a poisonous drug as it rapidly courses through the human veins, first to warm, then to kill. It was a pleasant sensation. Her eyes were as magnets from which he could not turn away.

Edith gazed steadily into the eyes of Butler as if waiting for his answer. It was only a moment's space of time, but it seemed an age to him. Then, as if from the effect of his soul's awakening, he answered:

"I am for honest government, and, so long as I shall man-

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age The Daily Telegram, it shall do loyal battle for honest government, honest officials and honest citizenship."

"Thank God for your noble manhood," exclaimed Edith as she extended her hand, which Butler grasped within his own.

"You are a holy inspiration to a noble manhood," returned Butler with choking voice.

A NEW RECRUIT

CHAPTER XVII.

A NEW RECRUIT.

When Joe Butler departed from the Marchand home that evening, he felt that he had entered a new world, a new life. Many times did he stop, turn, and intently gaze upon the old homestead ere he had passed beyond the viewpoint. Noble were the emotions that filled his heart, his mind. His soul was revived with the hopes that voluntarily sprang up within him, created, perhaps, by that prince of artists, imagination, as it presented rare pictures studded with precious gems for his hungering and famished vision.

What inspiration had come to him? What secret influence had reformed his recent inclinations? What power had reversed his plans and started him again on the verdant road of rigid integrity, where flowers bloom and birds sing the whole year round?

"What care I," said he, as he walked sprightly along toward his apartments, "what Mr. Pletcher, Mr. Jones, or any other person may think, so long as they shall and must know that 'justice' is my watchword, and 'honorable conduct' my guide. They may call me 'fool,' but they shall honor me in the end. They may scowl at me for not being their 'catpaw,' but they will call for me when they want honest men. They can't buy me—they can't scare me—they can't force me to

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become their tool of corruption; and, by the God of Heaven, they shall not shake me in my resolve to stand for truth, honesty and exact justice to all men in all places."

Butler had reached his rooms, and, as he entered, he discovered a note which had been inserted beneath the door. It was from his assistant, or the city editor, requesting his immediate presence at the office of The Daily Telegram.

"All right, Butler, I guess you can comply with this request without overdoing yourself," said he talking to himself, a habit which afflicts many newspaper writers. Arriving at the office, he was informed by his assistant that Mr. Pletcher had been there and left directions that the report of the Council proceedings, as they actually occurred, should not appear in tomorrow's issue of the paper.

"The Telegram must publish the matter fully and in detail," said Butler, "in tomorrow's issue, regardless of Mr. Pletcher's directions or desires. It is the business of a newspaper to publish the news. That is what the people pay their money for, and so long as I am the manager here The Daily Telegram will be run according to my directions. Please see that the matter comes out in tomorrow's issue, and printed in full."

"Thank you, sir, I will see to it," was the only reply. Butler passed on out, returning to his apartments where he prepared to retire. But he knew he could neither rest nor sleep. His whole being was awake. His mind was filled with a raging battle 'twixt duty and policy. Duty won the victory in a walk, and policy slinked away like a whipped cur. The battle ended, the victory won, joy returned and filled his soul to overflowing.

He redonned his attire and went out upon the streets.

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The night air was apparently bracing, and Butler began a brisk walk. Ere he had gone far, he was suddenly surprised, and his ears shocked by the most unearthly screams that ever emanated from the throat of a human being.

He stopped, looked down the side street where a little dingy hut, filled with squalor and filth, sat perched upon stilts along the pavement and daily passed by thousands of the city's "best citizens." From the hut came a human being in the form of a woman, half-clad, throwing her arms wildly about and uttering the most piercing and horrifying screams that Butler had ever heard.

"Coke fiend," muttered Butler, as the half-clad maniac passed swiftly by him in her frenzy, only to run into the yawning clutches of a brass-buttoned blue-coat.

"Come, ye hag; its in the station ye'll go fer tonight, sure it is," said the blue-coat, as he slipped the iron bracelets upon her bony wrists and gave them a turn that threw the semblance of a woman flat upon her back with a shriek of pain, while the brute held to the iron chain, tittering with ghoulish glee at the torture he had effected.

Butler had observed the proceedings, and, half-crazed with anger at the apparent cruelty of the policeman, at once started across the street to avenge the wrong, but it occurred to him that the hour was late, the section of the city somewhat shady in reputation, and that an altercation under the circumstances with an officer of the peace might reflect, unjustly, upon him, should it reach the public print.

He stopped—he could not take the chances. He would, however, through curiosity, the natural born trait of newspaper men and women, follow the spectacle to the station. Taking another street so as to avoid the furor created by

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the "coke fiend" and the "Americanized Shamrock" along their route to the station, Butler won out by a rod or so. He regretted that he had come. Every sense of decency and humanity within him was shocked and affronted. The poor wreck of a woman had been dragged, and beaten with the policeman's "billy," until she was covered with bruises and blood.

"What a shame," remarked Butler as he gazed upon the poor, frail, bleeding, accursed creature, "a rag and a bone and a hank of hair."

"What's it to ye; may be ye'd like a taste o' it yerself," retorted the "Shamrock" as he bristled up toward Butler with his "billy" drawn. Butler stepped back a pace or two, then turned into the chief's office, but, on finding no one there, came out and passed on up the street to his own office.

The following appeared in The Daily Telegram the next morning, under extra heavy, black headlines:

"The dregs of hell are bartered and sold in our fair city by some of our 'respectable' druggists, with impunity. Deadly drugs are dealt out over their counters to men, women and children without discrimination and without question so long as the wherewith is produced in payment therefor. When crazed with the poison, then the policeman begins his shameful clubbing and dragging, until the victim is almost beyond human aid. If a respectable citizen dares think aloud of the disgraceful scene, he is insulted and sometimes clubbed by the policeman.

"Last night I witnessed one of these scenes. It will remain upon my mental vision to my dying hour. It was a little slip of humanity, a woman, crazed with morphine or

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cocaine which she had openly purchased at some 'respectable' drug store. On her pinched and pitiful face the haggard lines of dissipation were so plainly drawn that one could not question the cause. From dark ringed sockets her listless eyes gazed out without seeing. From her parched and purple lips she emitted the vilest of words that, if she heard them at all, seemed to her as sweet and beautiful as a godly mother's lullaby.

"Poor thing, she did not know—she was crazed by the drug and almost dead from the policeman's cruelty toward her. Her figure was emaciated and had lost the symmetry of its former days. She had been a beautiful girl, but now she was the very likeness of degradation itself. Poisoned by the accursed drugs, she had lost all instincts of womanhood, all sense of shame, and all memory of honor.

"As she lay upon the floor of the police station, bleeding, bruised, and racked with pain caused by the policeman's 'billy,' I looked upon her with moistened eyes and bleeding heart, and I said:

"'Poor little thing. As sweet, radiant and beautiful as you once were, perhaps, now your soul is polluted, your life is cursed, and your very presence a reproach. Once you romped and played in the sunshine of a mother's holy love. Once you clung securely to a loving father's hand. Once you walked contentedly, sheltered under a doting husband's protecting arm. But alas! Innocently at first, you quieted pain with the poisonous drug. It was, you no doubt thought, your friend, and was, indeed, not less a friend than was your druggist.

"'Poor girl! A few more days, or months, or years, and you will be sleeping peacefully beside babbling brooks and

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rippling streams. Your thin, wan hands will be folded across your sunken breast. No loved ones will press a farewell kiss upon your brow. No tears, no sighs, no regrets that you are gone.' But this is not an isolated case. Hundreds of such cases exist in this city. Will the good people awaken to this awful condition? If there is no law to prevent both the open and indiscriminate sale of poison and the brutality of the police force, then let the people see to it that heroic action is taken to suppress both evils. In the name of humanity, I pledge my honest, faithful efforts. Who will join me?

"JOE BUTLER."

Hardly had Butler fallen asleep ere the newsboys were upon the streets crying their wares to the early passerby. Occasionally, a citizen could be seen scanning the columns of the Telegram by the aid of the early morning light. Sometimes, passersby would hail each other with a reference to the report of the Council proceedings and a suggestion that "young Marchand is all right," or that "Butler was getting after fake druggists." When the early risers picked up their papers from the front porches or galleries, their eyes would invariably rest upon the big headlines relating to the Council meeting or the "Coke Fiends," and the reports of both were read with eagerness. The breakfast table talk was, generally, confined to a discussion of these subjects, alone. The business men, as a rule, paid little heed to it. Some of them frowned or scowled and simply suggested that Marchand and Butler were fanatics. Others smiled, and praised both men. The ladies of the various households, as a rule, gloried in the nobility of the two men. Some of them determined to join the "cleaning up crusade." The ministers

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of the city churches stared, and wondered that crime was so rampant in their fair city. Some of them cared little about it, others felt that an awakening must be brought about. Here was a newspaper man, a non-church member, crying aloud and inviting the good people to "come over into Macedonia and help" him, while the godly church people went about with their eyes closed to these evils.

Many there were who thought they saw a connection of the whole moral movement with politics. They could see, they imagined, that the people, when fully aroused, would come into their own rights. In that they were not wrong. The people had made a beginning by electing Marchand, and he was doing whatever was within his power to bring about a better moral and political condition. He could effect no permanent good without the aid of the people. The government belonged to the whole citizenship, and it would be just what the citizenship would make it. The Daily Telegram had been constantly placing these facts before the people. They had begun to realize the truth of these facts, and the time was rapidly ripening for a concerted movement all along the line.

Long before the appointed time of the meeting of Pletcher, Butler and Marchand, and long before Butler had arrived at his office, his telephone was kept in almost constant use. Citizens, ladies and gentlemen, throughout the city rang up to assure him of their aid and assistance in his movement for a better moral status. When Butler arrived at his office he was, at first, surprised, then greatly elated at the many messages from the good citizens. He had not even dreamed that his little appeal would evoke more than an occasional expression of regret. Upon the contrary, there

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had already an army of good citizens joined him in his battle for right. What would the day bring forth? As he thus pondered, his 'phone rang. He responded in person. O joy, the message was from Edith! That, alone, was sufficient to have repaid him for all his worry. The message bore good news. In her quiet, Christian way, she would arouse an influence that would greatly aid in the struggle.

The conversation had but ceased when the 'phone again rang. Rev. Wilson would take the matter up with the Pastors' Association that very day, and would report results to the Telegram. Mr. Johnson, the Secretary of the newly organized Society for the "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," rang up and pledged the co-operation of that Association. Butler suggested a change in the name, to-wit: "Prevention of Cruelty by Animals" so as to apply to some of the members of the police force of the city.

By the time of the arrival of Mr. Pletcher and Marchand, Butler had the assurance of so many good citizens of their willingness to join in the movement for a better moral condition of the city, that he was not only elated, but felt a confidence in his position that could not be shaken.

Pletcher was not in the most pleasant mood when he entered Butler's office. In fact, he pretended to be in a bad humor, at first, and began with:

"I thought I left directions that the report of the Council meeting should be published in a modified form."

"So I was informed last night," replied Butler.

"Well, why was not my order obeyed?" replied Pletcher.

"Because you have no authority to direct what the Telegram shall or shall not publish. Besides, the Telegram is not going to suppress the truth any longer, no matter what

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others may want it to do. I trust you understand me, Mr. Pletcher."

"I think I do. What do you want for your stock in the plant?"

"Ten thousand dollars."

"Whew! But you never put in half that amount of money."

"No, not one-fourth, but I've put something else into it that's done more to make the plant what it is than your money has ever done."

"Well, we will talk that matter over later. Here comes Marchand."

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Walter, pleasantly, as he entered the office. After taking a seat he turned to Pletcher and said:

"I understand you wanted a conference with me, and I have come here for that purpose."

"Well," growled Pletcher, "we may as well get right down to business. I may as well tell you that I am greatly displeased with the stand you have taken in regard to the back tax matter. I, together with a good many of my friends, think it is unjust and unfair to us to have you bring up these old, stale matters that have been dormant for so many years."

"Pardon me, Mr. Pletcher, but did you ever raise your voice in behalf of those poor people who were sold out of house and home through this back tax business?"

"No, I presumed the matter would die out of its own accord, and that by putting honest, energetic young men like yourself into office, we would start off on a new business

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basis, and hereafter run the city government as it should be run."

"You held the office of Tax Collector some years ago, did you not, Mr. Pletcher?" asked Walter.

"Yes," answered Pletcher as he twisted around uneasily in his chair.

"I have some tax receipts issued by you as Collector, but the books of the Collector's office do not seem to show that the money was ever accounted for to the city, or that the taxes on the specific property were paid. The holders of the receipts are defendants in tax suits, and of course they have a good and valid defense. Can you throw any light on the matter?"

"No, and I don't intend to try," answered Pletcher.

"But, my dear Mr. Pletcher, I am asking you in good faith, for information that, if you can not now give, you should proceed to acquire without delay. You are personally interested in the matter, while I am only interested on behalf of the public. I must and will have the information, whether you furnish it or not."

"I think you fail to understand. I will look into the matter, and if any error or mistake has occurred while I was responsible for the conduct of the office, why, of course, I will rectify it."

"That is all I would ask, Mr. Pletcher. I have no desire to cause you any unnecessary trouble. You must know that when people are sued for taxes and they hold tax receipts showing the taxes to be paid, they have a legal and moral right to a full and free investigation of the whole affair. The investigation I have already begun. I fear that

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the error or mistake rests with the Collector's office, *and during your incumbency.*"

"Well, it is not your official duty to dig up those old matters, is it?"

"Not primarily. It is my official duty to not do injustice to any one. These defendants who hold your receipts are preparing to implead you in those tax suits, and I would be powerless to prevent them, even if I desired. In that event it becomes my official duty to 'dig up all those old matters' and everything else bearing upon the subject, for the enlightenment of the court and the jury.

"Is there any necessity of pushing these tax suits to a speedy termination? If given the time, I would like to make a very thorough investigation of the matter you have mentioned, and, of course, I would not care to have any uncalled for publicity in the meantime."

"You understand, Mr. Pletcher, that so far I have not filed a single tax suit, except those against the city officials. The suits now pending, except the ones mentioned, were all filed by my predecessors. My plan is, however, to file suits as rapidly as possible against the large property holders who owe back taxes, and these suits I will push to a termination in preference to the others."

"That would probably be all right, if there were any necessity for it whatever, but I see none. Why not cut down the running expenses of the government so that the income will be sufficient to meet them?"

"I am not responsible for the bad management of the city's affairs at present, nor in the past. I am responsible for the conduct of my office, only. I intend to do my

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duty without favor to friend or fear of foe. No amount of argument shall sway me from my purpose. You have been my friend, and I assure you that your kindness has been thoroughly appreciated. I would not expect you to presume upon that friendship to the extent that I would blend it with the unfaithful discharge of my official duty. Let us fully understand each other. I need not remind you that you owe a large amount of back taxes, or else the Collector's books import a falsity. That many citizens hold tax receipts signed by you, as Collector, some years ago, and still the records show their taxes unpaid. With the latter question, I hope I shall not be called upon to deal. With the former, my duty is plain, and you may as well prepare for an early settlement, otherwise a suit will be filed."

"Well," sighed Pletcher, "you certainly make yourself plain, and I commend you for it. If I am compelled to pay up, I certainly shall hope to see every other citizen of this town made to do likewise."

"Now, Mr. Pletcher, you have but repeated the words spoken by hundreds of the poor people against whom those tax suits were brought by my predecessors. You are not unlike all other human beings. You want good, honest government, especially when the other fellow is compelled to 'be good.'"

It was seen that no amount of argument or persuasion could shake Marchand from his stand for "exact justice" in all things. It was evident that, if he could be moved at all, other means would have to be employed. The friendship of Butler had at first been thought sufficient, but was not. The friendship of Pletcher availed nothing. The conduct of the City Council and the railings of his political

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enemies could not sway Marchand. The people were rapidly acquainting themselves with the heroic struggle which Marchand was making, and their faith and confidence in him grew stronger daily. His conduct was an encouragement to those who wanted good government, and a menace to others who did not. With some of them the "day of reckoning" was near at hand. The golden orb of justice and honest government was slowly rising to its noon-day meridian.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE RECRUITS.

When Pletcher departed from the office of The Daily Telegram, he proceeded to a pre-arranged conference with some of his friends, who were likewise "interested," and to whom he reported "progress." In that conference was the father of the City Attorney, *LeBerte Marchand*, but he was there by request and in the capacity of legal adviser—an employed attorney. As such, he had a legal right there. In fact, *LeBerte Marchand* had not comprehended the full import nor purpose of the conference, although he had accepted a splendid "retainer" fee from the "Association," with the prospect of something better in the way of regular fees, to follow.

The Association was supposed to have for its object the betterment of "Civic Conditions," or some other equally good sounding purpose, and was, or was to be, composed of "the best citizens" and those who had the real "interests of the city at heart." No one could doubt that fact, for among the membership there was Mr. Pletcher, a large property owner, and interested in many of the largest enterprises in the city. Then there was Mr. Jones, highly connected with the First Presbyterian Church, a banker, and a director in several railroads with "allied interests." Mr. Brown, owner of one of

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the largest stores in the city, was also there. He was likewise connected with large corporate interests and owned much property. And there was Mr. White, manager and superintendent of the water-works. Among those present was Mr. Johnson, son of the old and respected Rev. Johnson of the Baptist Church. Mr. Johnson owned the large drug store on Canal Street, besides other smaller "joints" in the various parts of the city which he operated "for the convenience" of the people.

The little assemblage was of the city's "most substantial" citizenship, and it was to be expected that the general welfare of the whole people would be considered. True, it was not proposed to "storm the citadel." They would, however, bring about the city's greatest good in that quiet, deliberate way, in which evil outraces virtue, every time.

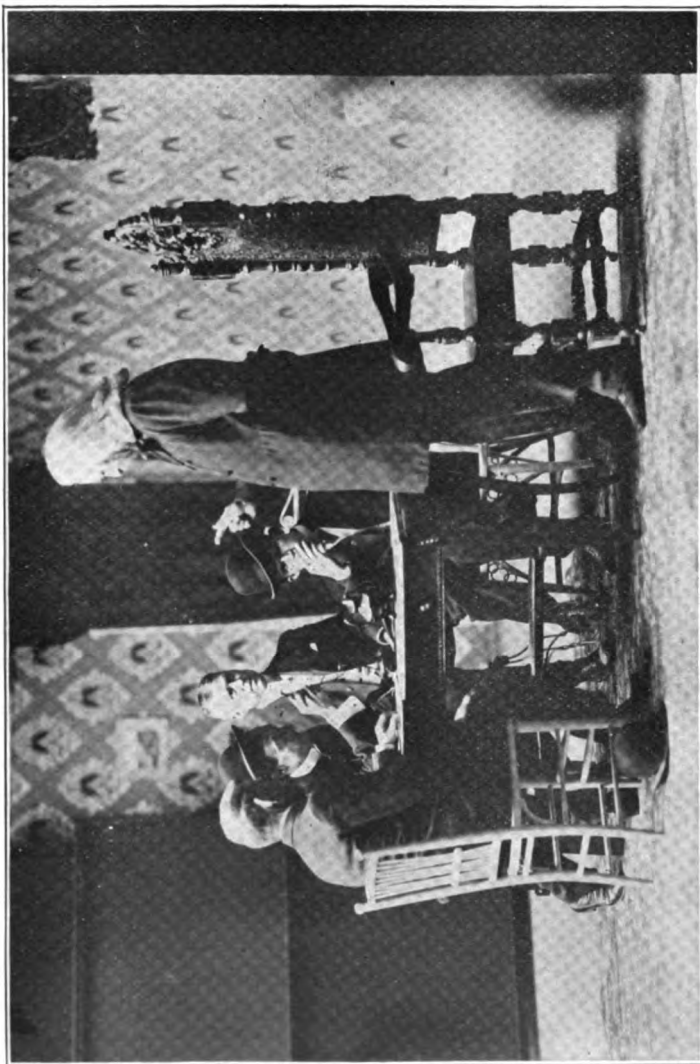
The conference had proceeded along general lines until it touched upon the official duties of the City Attorney. Marchand had joined in the conference with that degree of apparent interest, sufficient to warrant the feeling that he was "earning" his fee. One suggestion led to another, until LeBerte Marchand, rich in experience and acute of observation, could see the fine "Italian hand" of the astute leaders. He could discern the motive, could see to the very bottom of the plan. He could see where the "buck and gag" was to be placed upon the City Attorney, and that he, the father, was selected to do the job, as the "paid hireling" of those whom he called his friends. He kept his own counsel for a spell, fearing that he was in error—he might be wrong. He then entered more freely into the spirit of the conference, that he might detect the real and ultimate object of the leading members of the conference.

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It soon developed that the collection of the back taxes was the seat of the trouble. All present were agreed that the payment of these taxes was like paying for a dead horse. True, the city was deeply in debt, and had been bonded to the constitutional limit. No sinking fund had been created with which to pay off any of the bonds when they fell due, as required by the State Constitution. It had been criminal in the city officers to fail in providing a sinking fund, and the bondholders might, if they ever became aware of the fact, cause serious trouble, even to the extent of criminally prosecuting the former city officials for such neglect. This suggestion by LeBerte Marchand caused a momentary uneasiness on the part of some of those present who had formerly graced the offices of the city.

"In justice to the bondholders, as well as the people," suggested Marchand, "the back taxes should be paid. There are other reasons. Every citizen of the city should bear his equal and just proportion of the expenses of local government. When he fails to do that, it lays a heavier burden upon his fellow citizen, and that is unequal and unjust. Take, for instance, those cases where some of our citizens have already had their home sold over their head for these back taxes, while others still owe the city large amounts. Had we, of the class considered somewhat wealthy, either voluntarily or under compulsion contributed our just proportion of the expenses of government, the injustice to those citizens would not have occurred.

"Are there any among us that will now insist that the poorer class, against hundreds of whom legal action has already been taken, should be compelled to pay their taxes and costs, and the rest of us go free?"



(FROM PHOTO BY J. MOODY DAWSON)
"THE PEOPLE ARE ALREADY DEMANDING JUSTICE—EQUAL JUSTICE TO ALL ALIKE."

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"But we have employed you, Mr. Marchand, to assist us in finding a remedy," interjected Smith.

"True, and if you will bear with me, I will direct you aright ere my duties have been completed. The second reason is, that we have had the protection of the government in greater proportion than the less wealthy class; and in that, the expenses of the government have been greater, per capita, on our account than on theirs. Thus, the indebtedness of the city is ours, more than theirs, and if we will be honest with ourselves, we will not shirk our responsibilities. To my mind there is but one of two courses for us to pursue. We should all pay our just debts to the city, or we should restore those who have been injured, to their just status, and then dismiss all pending tax suits."

"But our city is in a deplorable condition, financially," chirped Mr. Johnson, "and the tax collections must go on, especially where suits have been filed, at least."

"I see that neither the logic of my argument, nor the soundness of my deductions, have availed anything. Let me ask you, Mr. Johnson, one question. Are you willing to enforce the thousands of suits for back taxes, and yourself escape from paying what you owe?"

"The first law of human nature, you know, Mr. Marchand. That is what we hired you to accomplish for us."

"You are mistaken, sir. You retained me for nothing of the kind."

In his earlier days, LeBerte Marchand, like some lawyers, was willing to take employment, and if the compensation were sufficient, was also willing to lead his client along the very edge of the precipice over which honor and honesty sometimes accidentally fall, only to be swallowed in the abyss of

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fraud and corruption below. But in his later years, sobered by sorrow, mellowed by misfortune, de-energized by old age, and at last coddled into docile contentment by the sacred influences of a loving family, he would not tread the dangerous paths that might engulf his honor or taint his family name, no matter how tempting the proffered fee. He realized that there was something in life worth more than money. He had learned that fact by experience. He had passed through that period of frenzy when money-getting was his sole ambition. How it had dwarfed his better nature. How it had stunted his spiritual growth. How it had checkered his moral pathway. His sorrows had been the greatest blessings that ever came to him, though in disguise. They stopped his frenzied career. They put him in commune with God. They gave back to him the purity of his childhood. They gave him strength to retain that purity.

Old age had crept upon LeBerte Marchand ere he and his friends were aware of that fact. As he stood before the assemblage of his friends upon this occasion, as their legal adviser and counselor, his white locks flowing down over his shoulders, his form bended, his limbs atremble, he appealed to his clients with more effect than could have done a younger man. He spoke calmly, argued logically, deduced clearly. Withal, his hearers expected something of him which he would never give. At last, with his pride wounded, his spirit bruised, his anger aroused beyond his control, the old man continued:

"Gentlemen, I fear I can no longer serve you in your purposes, which are now evident to my mind. Permit me to suggest to you, that while you are here planning and plotting for your own selfish and individual gain, a mighty

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storm is brewing around the city. It will soon burst over your heads. Think you that the people will longer remain pacified with your lullaby? If so, you are mistaken. The people are already demanding justice—equal justice to all alike. In that demand the people are right. In your refusal to do justice, you are wrong. Are you not willing to do that which, in all common justice, is due to your city, to your own people, and which you know to be fair and right, between man and man, and between yourselves and the city?

“Some of you represent Eastern capitalists who own the majority of the local corporate enterprises. Our people have given them the rights, franchises and privileges they enjoy in this city. The earnings of these corporations are made up of the money which our people pour into their coffers. What do the people receive in return? Poor, miserable service.

“Our people are a patient people, but there is a limit to their patience. Is it any wonder that the Southern and Western cities have raised the cry of ‘Municipal Ownership?’ The various cities have suffered so long under the repeated promises of better conditions, better facilities, only to be disappointed, that their only salvation appears to be in ‘Municipal Ownership.’ The continuation of this practice will, sooner or later, bring a change of masters throughout the South and West, and I hope throughout the whole country.

“From this extreme laxity and indifference to the people’s rights will certainly come another extreme which will more than bring justice to the people. One extreme follows another, as a rule. Your exorbitant rates may be trimmed down, and the conduct of your business regulated by ordinances and the law. You will then realize that your sys-

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tem has not been the proper method in dealing with the people.

"Pardon me, gentlemen. Perhaps I have not been warranted in thus speaking, but my spirit has been tortured, my pride wounded. I regret that you have tried to coddle the 'old man.' I fear that through him you might seek to stifle the official integrity of his noble son. If so, you have gone a step too far. I do not charge you with so doing, but it has that appearance, and I can serve you no longer. I therefore bid you good-day."

When the old gentleman passed out from the conference, the conferees stared blankly at each other, as though some great calamity had befallen them. Pletcher was the first to recover, but he had grown somewhat accustomed to surprises, that day. As he recovered, his anger became somewhat aroused at the "unpolitic" remarks which Mr. Johnson had made to the old gentleman, and he let himself be understood on that score. Johnson was hard headed and saw no reason why "the bunch could not take the bull by the horns" and "do as they pleased."

"What! Defy the people at such a time as this?" shouted Pletcher. "It is sheer folly; nonsense. There is more truth in what the old man said than you dream of."

"My opinion is," said Banker Jones, "that the matter was not diplomatically handled. Marchand has always been our friend, but he has a rather high sense of honor, and under different circumstances we could rely upon him."

"Could not we arrange with the City Attorney," suggested Smith, "for some sort of compromise on the back tax question, so as to afford temporary relief until this apparent wave of fanaticism passes over?"

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"That was the object of this conference," returned Pletcher, "and there was only one peaceable way of accomplishing that result, to wit, through the father. But I doubt the wisdom of pursuing that course further."

"Why can not the city council repeal the ordinance? That would stop further proceedings in the matter," ventured White.

"That would be useless, for the authority rests in the charter and not in the ordinance," returned Pletcher.

"But we could procure a new charter at the next session of the Legislature," interjected Mr. Black.

"Perhaps! But our city election is held prior to the state election," said Pletcher, somewhat irritated.

"What has that to do with it?" queried Jones, the dispenser of drugs and cocaine.

"A heap," retorted Pletcher, his anger rising.

"Oh, well, if you are getting chicken-hearted on the matter," snarled Jones, "I reckon the rest of us can look after the matter."

"All right, Mr. Jones," returned Pletcher, angered to the degree of calmness. "I shall hereafter follow my own course."

"How is that? What do you mean?" quickly asked White.

"I mean just this: I will pay every cent of back taxes that I owe to the city, and I'll see to it that every other citizen shall do likewise. I have been playing into the hands of those who have not proven to be my friends, long enough. What are my profits? Promises—nothing but promises. I've been a tool, a dupe, a knave. I've been permitted to pick up a few crumbs that fell from the sumptuous table. Marchand told the truth when he called us agents of Eastern

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capitalists instead of representatives of our people. I admit the truth. It has robbed us of our civic pride, if any we ever had. We have devoted our best energies to making 'good returns' to our masters, at the expense of our people, simply for our personal, individual profit and gain. My share has been mostly promises, and I am done. Having been friends, let us remain so, but please count me out of further deals along this line. So far as I'm concerned, we may as well adjourn."

An earthquake would not have been more productive of results in that conference than was Pletcher's announcement. Those present had, for years, depended upon Pletcher to manage the political end of their affairs. They had, years before, elected him to office, and he had faithfully served their purpose. Retiring from public office, they had retained him in a sort of political way, at an unstated and uncertain compensation, and he was looked upon as a sort of local political oracle. Now that he had cut loose from them, they had cause to fear. It gave them opportunity to think for themselves. They were as a political bark without a rudder.

When Pletcher left the conference room, he went directly to the offices of Marchand & Marchand. There he found the father, the son, and Joe Butler in consultation. Pletcher was a man who, when aroused, never minced words. If he had his mind set, he went straight to the point. So he did upon this occasion. For some days he had been rather brooding over what he termed the ingratitude of his former masters for his slavish work in their behalf. It had rankled in his bosom before, but had been smothered with platitudes and promises, and thus he would put off the evil day. He

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knew he had sins of omission and commission to answer for, and that always tended to quiet his anger. Not so, at last. His sins, if sins they were, had resulted from his slavery to the agents, or representatives of foreign capitalists, instead of serving the best interests of the community in which he lived. He realized his knavery of the past. He recognized the treachery of his companions. He saw them sitting at the sumptuous table, gorging themselves, as he termed it, while he was only permitted to pick up the poor crumbs from the floor. He would no longer train in their political party. Not only that, but, when he had gained his own consent to do justice to the people, he determined that they also should do justice. He had burned the bridges, there was no turning back. The only course was, "forward."

And Pletcher did go forward. Upon entering the Marchand offices, he frankly explained that he had come "for business." He explained his mission, and assured the City Attorney that he not only desired to adjust his indebtedness to the city, but that he hoped every citizen should be made to do likewise. He was assured by Walter Marchand that, it was a great pleasure to the City Attorney to take up the matter in a spirit of fairness, and that they would, no doubt, get along admirably.

The formality of the business announcement over, the four friends dwelt upon the condition of civic affairs, all agreeing that the very near future held in store a moral awakening.

"And when it comes," warmly exclaimed Pletcher, as he extended his hand to the City Attorney, "please remember, that from this day forth, I am with you, heart and hand, for honest government, and the best interests of our people."

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE STRANGE OLD MAN.

LeBerte Marchand did not divulge all that had transpired at the caucus of the "best citizens," as related in the preceding chapter. He deemed it best to withhold the information and deal with matters as his better judgment should dictate. The day had been an eventful one, if we may judge from the good results flowing from the efforts of those interested.

There was joy around the fireside of "The Cedars," when Mr. Marchand and Walter returned from the city that evening and related the experiences of the day. Edith and Mrs. Marchand had not been idle, but, upon the contrary, had gone out among their lady friends, quietly and calmly talking for a better moral condition of the city. All with whom they came in contact appeared to realize that a change for the better must come. Many had long wondered that something had not already been done. They had been waiting for others to take the lead. Some of them had kin-folk who were connected with politics, or were employed by those interests that controlled the politics of the city, and on that account they had remained inactive—quiet. In other words, their cowardice was stronger than their morality—and cowardice was their master. Now that there were leaders, they

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would prick up their courage. They would, some of them, venture to let it be known in a mild way that they loved good government, morality and official integrity. "No one could blame them for that," poor souls. Others expressed their willingness to put on their armor and go into the battle to do or die. So Edith reported.

"And who, what class of people did you observe, were willing to do such noble battle?" asked Walter.

"If my judgment be not in error, it was the less wealthy class. I know that from those whom I consider wealthy, and of the real 'smart set,' we received the least encouragement. They appeared more listless and unconcerned, or, if not unconcerned, certainly less willing to lend encouragement by their own exertions."

"Not all of your wealthy friends appeared that way, Edith, dear," suggested Mrs. Marchand, "for, if I be not mistaken, some of them appeared quite willing to join in the work."

"Oh, certainly, mother. I did not wish to be understood as saying that none of the wealthy folk were willing, but rather that, comparatively, fewer of them exhibited a willingness to join, heart and soul, in the active work. But how goes the business of my brother's office? I'm so anxious about everything that you and Mr. Butler have in hand concerning public affairs."

"Indeed, my darling sister," returned Walter, laughingly, "and when did such remarkable interest arise touching the affairs of my friend?"

"Ha, ha, ha—you naughty old brother. Did I not love you so greatly, I would chide you for your bad behavior. My remarkable interest in Mr. Butler was awakened when he threw off the galling yoke of his masters and came out

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boldly as a valiant soldier for the cause in which my brother was so manfully struggling. Whether it was because I loved my brother more than I loved the cause, I am unable to say, but certainly because I loved both the cause and my big, manly brother."

"Three cheers for Queen Edith!" should the elder Marchand, as he arose from his chair and gently stroked his daughter's sleek, beautiful head of hair. "Edith, you are indeed a noble, queenly girl, and happy the man who shall be fortunate——"

"Ha, ha, ha, daddy," laughed Edith, putting her pretty little hand over the father's mouth, preventing his further speech, "you are as naughty as my big brother. You should not tease your little girl, for I'm the only little girl you've got, you know."

"Yes, Edith, and the very best little girl in all the world, but I suppose we will lose you some of these days."

"No, I think not, papa, not the way you mean."

"Why not, my child? Let me see, you are now twenty——"

"There, now, daddy," and again Edith prevented further speech by the ready application of her hand. "You should never deliberate or figure on a woman's age, no matter how old or young she may be. It is a real crime, you know; and if we women were permitted to sit upon the jurist's bench, and you should be charged with such a crime. Oh, goodness, what a sentence! Let's see—what should I say, brother, in such a case, I being the judge?"

"And your father the criminal?" asked Walter.

"Why, certainly. Do you not see I am about to pass sentence?"

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"Oh, well, on account of his being your father, you should make the punishment very light."

"Exact justice at all times and in all places," mock-seriously returned Edith, "and you shall be punished thusly." Edith threw her arms around the old gentleman and kissed him with real warmth and fervor, then continued: "And now, having been punished with a just and righteous punishment, I trust you will let the advice of the court sink deep into your heart, and never, never be guilty of that awful crime again. So mote it be."

"And I shall come to the rescue of the criminal by administering like punishment upon the court," said Walter, as he sprang forward, but Edith, darting under his arms with the agility of a cat, was beyond his reach in a jiffy, and in a playful mood sought protection at the mother's side, saying: "And the court will claim the protection of the Queen."

"And the Crown Prince will," said Walter, as he approached, "manifest his loyalty to the Queen as fittingly becomes a subordinate member of the royal family," then gently and tenderly enfolding the mother in his arms, saying to Edith at the same time, "and thereby ignore the court."

"You are fined for contempt of the court, and you shall remain in durance vile until wholly absolved therefrom," said Edith, mock-seriously.

"What is the fine? How shall I absolve myself, knowing not the mind of the court?"

"The court knows its own mind, and transgressors shall be doubly punished if they don't correctly guess what the court really requires as the price of absolution."

"One, two, three, and away we go," said Walter, as he sprang after Edith, overtaking her in the library, where,

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after several attempts, he succeeded in paying the penalty and absolving himself from the contempt of the court.

"Oh, how happy Edith and Walter are in each other's company," said Mrs. Marchand to the father. "They are more like ardent lovers, and, really, I don't believe that either of them ever gives a thought to the question of marriage."

"No, I reckon not," answered the father. "Well, I suppose Edith will take a fancy to some one some of these days."

"I doubt it. Edith has, at intervals, confided in me. She loves Walter beyond our comprehension, strange as it may seem. And Walter likewise loves Edith. It is indeed a strange affair. Of course, they can never marry each other, and so long as they remain together as they are, neither of them will ever take a fancy for another. I sometimes feel that there must be some mistake about——"

"Beg your pardon, mother, I must telephone to Mr.—— about a little matter," interrupted the old gentleman, as he suddenly arose and passed into the library.

"That is strange," thought Mrs. Marchand; "he has apparently evaded a conversation on that subject several times. I do not understand it. Can there be some mystery connected with his family?" mused the wife. "If so, certainly the brother and sister are in complete ignorance of it. Oh, well, I suppose it is just his way, and I will not allow my mind to become beclouded with suspicion, for it would bring nothing but unrest and discontent, and the Lord knows I've had my portion of that."

Her soliloquy was interrupted by the return of Edith and Walter, who, having adjourned court, as they said, had begun the discussion of economic questions and politics. Wal-

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ter had been, for some time, making a study of the trade conditions of the United States with Latin-America, and to him it became quite an interesting subject.

"Why do you devote your attention to that subject, my son, while matters of local government, local affairs, are in such deplorable condition as would, seemingly, demand your whole time and attention," asked the father, who had just entered the room.

"I suppose one might as well ask the Ben Davis apple why it is red, or the mule why it has long ears. It is just the nature of the brute, as the saying goes. But, to be more serious, I would say that, when I first learned that the United States enjoyed less than ten per cent of the Latin-American trade, I was astonished and naturally began to search for the cause."

"Now, why should such a question bother you, as you are not an importing nor an exporting merchant?" replied the father.

"Because Latin-America is very close to our Gulf ports, and whatever increase of trade there may be with those countries, the majority of it will pass through those ports, thereby benefiting the Gulf coast country in the way of additional business enterprises, additional railroad facilities, and the development of the country, generally."

"How would that benefit you, individually?" queried the father.

"I am happy to state that I am able to eliminate self and study the question from the standpoint of my country's welfare."

"What is the cause of our failure to capture the Latin-

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American trade, since we are such close neighbors?" queried Edith.

"There are several causes. One, and I think the most formidable reason, is that our exporters have never sought that trade in the proper manner. The Latin-American countries, you know, were for centuries European colonies, and were naturally compelled to do their trading with the mother countries. When they threw off the yoke of bondage, their merchants naturally clung to the old channels of trade to which they had been accustomed so long. The rising generations, one after another, were educated in the schools and colleges of Europe, where they continually cemented the old friendships and renewed the acquaintances of their fathers, thus creating an influence that the American merchant would find difficult to overcome."

"Yes, I should judge that the matter of their being educated in Europe would be a strong influence in case any large number of them were so educated," replied the father.

"From the most reliable sources I learn that about twenty-five thousand Latin-American students are to be found, annually, in the schools and colleges of Europe. They are of the wealthy class, and, of course, of those who do the business in Latin-America, so you may well judge what an influence it has upon the trade of those countries."

"What remedy can there be suggested for this condition, if any?" queried Edith.

"As to that, I am not now prepared to say, but I have noticed in the newspapers that over in Texas they are advocating the establishment of a Pan-American College of Commerce, and while I am not as yet fully acquainted with the proposition, I would not be surprised if those Texans

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have solved the problem. I shall acquaint myself with the details of the plan suggested by them. At any rate, the education of twenty-five thousand Latin-American students, annually, in the schools of Europe, appears to me to be the greatest barrier to the progress of the United States making inroads upon the trade of those countries."

"What is the nature of this proposed Pan-American College of Commerce, now being advocated in Texas? I remember reading something of it, but gave it no consideration. I must confess that I am becoming somewhat interested," said LeBerte Marchand.

"If I comprehend, it is to be an institution wherein there shall be taught and exemplified the languages, habits, customs, usages, wants and needs of all the Americas, and wherein there will be on permanent display and exposition all the articles of commerce that would be interchangeable, or that would be marketed in any of those countries."

"My boy, you are working upon a mighty big question. It is one which is vastly important to our whole country, and of particular benefit to our Gulf coast country. Hereafter, I shall feel a deep interest in the subject, and will be pleased to discuss it with you from time to time."

Further discussion of the subject was deferred, the servant having announced the arrival of Mr. Butler.

"Tell him to come right on in here," said Walter, casting a roguish eye at Edith, who, fleeing from the room and looking pleasantly at Walter over her shoulder as she went, said:

"You naughty old brother."

"I trust you will pardon my intrusion," said Butler, as he entered, "but by a stroke of fortune, good or ill, I know not

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which, some important business fell into my hands, which I desired to turn to my friends, and, as prompt attention is required, I thought it best to come directly to 'The Cedars.' "

"Why, Mr. Butler, you are always welcome under this roof, day or night, rain or shine. No intrusion, I assure you. What is the nature of the business?" replied Mr. Marchand.

"It is about a strange old man who was brought in on a tramp steamer this evening. He can not speak a word of English, nor of any other language that is intelligible to the various nationalities down on the wharves. It seems he was picked up along or near the Florida coast after the storm, a few days ago. Where he came from, or how he managed to survive the storm on the waters of the Gulf in the wreck of a craft to which he clung when found by the tramp steamer is a mystery to those who rescued him, so they say. The greater mystery, however, is the large collection of valuable jewels, or pearls, which he had with him when rescued.

"One of the men on the ship told me that the market value of the pearls would exceed a million dollars. And now to the business part of it. I was at the wharf when the boat came in. Immediately upon its being landed, this strange old man was rushed down the gang plank by two big, burly fellows, acting under orders of the Captain, and upon reaching the wharf, they tried to drive him away.

"Speaking no language recognizable or understood by anyone present, the old fellow protested against this harsh treatment in the only manner he knew, and by his actions indicated that he was being torn from some object most dear to him. I approached him, thinking I might be of service. He looked appealingly into my eyes for a moment, then quickly placing one hand over his heart and the other hand

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upon his forehead, bowed almost to the ground. As he then stood erect, he handed me this large pearl. I looked at it, first thinking of its intrinsic value, then wondered what connection it could have with the distress of the strange old man. Suddenly, pointing to the jewel in my hand, then pointing to the ship, he indicated that a great many more pearls were withheld from him there.

"I began to comprehend his meaning. I hailed one of the men who came from the boat, and he told me of the old man's rescue, and of the pearls, most of which the officers of the boat had confiscated. Immediately I arranged an understanding with this man, and then set about to recover the jewels for my poor old man. I went upon the boat and demanded the jewels. I was informed that it would be safer for me on dry land, and I took kindly to the hint. Then I came here to interest you gentlemen in the matter."

"What became of the strange old man? Perhaps he is at the bottom of the river, now," said Walter.

"Oh, no, I put him in the —— private sanitarium, where no one is to even see him except upon my direction. He is safe."

"And your informer, your witness—what became of him?" inquired the elder Marchand.

"He is at the home of one of our friends and will remain quiet until further orders."

"And what about the officers of the ship? They will probably carry away and secrete the treasure during the night," said Walter.

"I do not think they will, as there are a number of detectives on watch, and every move made on board the ship will be carefully noted, while if any of them leave the boat

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during the night, they will be followed and duly accounted for."

"Butler, you are a wonder," said LeBerte Marchand. "You have the cunning of a detective, the tact and foresight of a lawyer, and, above all, the moral courage to strike down evil whenever and wherever you find it. Let me congratulate you."

"I thank you, sir, for the compliment, though I do not deserve it. I now place this matter in charge of your law firm, and as a retainer fee, I tender this jewel," replied Butler, handing the pearl to Walter, who, refusing to accept it, said:

"Why, bless you, generous old boy, I would not think of accepting any kind of a fee from you. Besides, as you are so averse to the wearing of jewelry and so fond of its display by the fairer sex, I doubt whether you will be long burdened with that beautiful gem."

Having finished the business for which he came, Butler departed, leaving the father and son to discuss the strange incident in its various legal aspects, and to wonder what could be the past history and the future of the "Strange Old Man."

MUNICIPAL POLITICS

CHAPTER XX.

MUNICIPAL POLITICS.

One morning, not long after the events last narrated, the telephone in the offices of Marchand & Marchand rang violently.

"Is Walter there?" questioned the speaker over the 'phone.

"Who is that?" replied the office boy.

"None of your — business; I want to speak to Walter."

"Do you mean Mr. Walter Marchand?"

"Yes, I mean Mr. Walter Marchand. If I had hold of you I'd twist your head off."

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I'll see if Mr. Walter Marchand is here."

Walter Marchand was present, and picking up the 'phone, began:

"Hello, who is speaking?"

"Hello, Walter. Say, have you decided whether or not you will stand for re-election?"

"Beg your pardon, but to whom am I talking? You have not yet informed me."

"Why, dad burn it, I am Joe Butler. Don't you know my voice?"

"I thought I recognized your voice, but, but——"

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"But what? Can't you answer my question? I'm in a hurry."

"Where are you?"

"I'm in my office. What's that got to do with it?"

"Well, I'll come to your office. So long." Walter hung the trumpet in the receiver and started for Butler's office.

"Confound that fellow," said Butler to himself. "He takes spells, at times, and closes up like a clam. I reckon he is about to conclude that he has had enough of politics, and throw us all down."

Butler, as has been previously noted, was afflicted with the habit of talking to himself, or soliloquizing. He seldom pursued this practice, or habit, at times and places where he would probably be overheard, but, like the criminal, he was caught when he least expected it. Like most newspaper men, he began looking out for the harvest that was fast ripening. There was a political campaign about to open up, and Butler was anxious to get his harvesting machinery in trim for the reaping. While he thus talked aloud to himself about the political situation, he had not observed the appearance at the office door of his listener, who, after a while, surprised Butler by saying:

"That's right, Butler. By Jove, there is no use letting the other dailies take the cream, and the Telegram take skimmed milk in this campaign. There's going to be a merry time of it, I tell you, and you may as well make hay."

"By George, Mr. Pletcher, you surprised me that time, to a certainty. Well, since you caught me red handed, come in and be seated. I want to have a word with you, anyhow, before Marchand gets here."

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"All right, I am at your service. What is it?"

"You indicated to me some time ago that you would like to have my interest in this plant. Now, if you are of the same mind still, I would like to come to an understanding, this very day."

"Why this very day?" asked Mr. Pletcher.

"I have reasons that I do not care to mention. I might say, however, that it is bad policy for a newspaper to change management in the middle of a campaign, and, if there is to be any change, I want it to be made now."

"Well, Butler, of course I was somewhat irritated about the back tax matter when I made that suggestion, but Marchand and I are getting on nicely now, and I am not certain that there is any necessity for a change."

"Of course, you will support Marchand for re-election, if he seeks it?"

"I had not heard that he would seek to be re-elected."

"He may not. But if he does, will you support him? That is what I want to know."

"Really, I had not thought about the matter. However, I think he has done real well. I should think he would have no trouble in being re-elected."

"Ha, ha, ha! Pletcher, you are as slippery as an eel. I'll say this to you, Pletcher, that if I remain with this institution, the Telegram will support Marchand, first, last and all through the campaign. Now, if that policy doesn't suit you, let us get right down to a complete understanding. I don't care to mince at the thing."

"Well, you have made a success of this institution, and you are making good money. If you disposed of your interest, where could you better yourself?"

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"Really, friend Pletcher, I believe I could manage to find a situation somewhere in this city. Don't you think so?"

"No doubt, but you would not abandon newspaper work, would you?"

"Not until after this campaign is over, certainly. In short, I intend to follow Marchand's lead and support him in whatever that lead may be, and in that I will not be alone."

"Do you think the people will flock to his support as they did before?"

"Will they? Who knows that they will, better than you? Besides, we will have a full municipal ticket in the field, this time."

"Yes, I heard you telling yourself about it, when I came, a while ago. But won't that weaken your forces?"

"No. It will add strength, instead."

"Suppose you can't get your men nominated by the party. What then?"

"To thunder with the party. Who is the party? A few political bosses have been the party, but there will be a new deal this time."

"I imagine that you will find it a difficult matter to get hold of the machinery of the party. Of course, you might organize a new party, but you know the people won't take well to that method."

"The people are more interested in good local government right now than in local party lines. What have party lines to do with local government, anyhow? The government is of, for and by the people. If each citizen would take a personal interest in our local government, then we would have a government by the people. As it has been, only those

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who had an interest in the party took part in our municipal politics, and the result was that our city was governed by political party bosses."

"Well, I think you are right to a degree, only."

"No one knows the truth of that statement better than you, Mr. Pletcher. Your own ears have, in the past, tingled with the cry of 'Boss Pletcher.'"

"Oh, yes, but that never scared me. People like bosses in politics. The people could do nothing without bosses. They have got to have a leader."

"Certainly, a leader, but not a boss with a big stick. Bossism in municipal government results from a lack or a neglect of the good citizens to do their duty."

"Well, how will you organize your new deal, as you call it? You will necessarily have to organize a party, won't you?"

"In a sense, yes, But it will be the party of the whole people. It will be of the citizens of our city who are for honest government, for all our people, instead of government for the few, as heretofore."

"I don't catch your meaning, Mr. Butler. Elaborate a little, please."

"All right. Heretofore, our city government was apparently operated by Pletcher, Johnson, Smith, Black, White, and a few others. It was operated for the particular benefit of those who did the operating. You know that, don't you?"

"Well, proceed."

"To be a little more explicit, I might add that, when you were an official, you entertained a particular fellow feeling for Johnson, Smith, White, Black, and those same 'few others' that helped push the band wagon during the campaign.

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That fellow feeling caused you to grant special favors to those named, and their class, that were not granted to the people generally. Is that not so, Mr. Pletcher?"

"Well, I am listening—go ahead."

"You are a good listener, I observe. When I talk, I want a man to agree with me or disagree. Of all the men in the world, Pletcher, you are in a better position to agree with me, or disagree and refute my statements. You do neither, and I shall not waste my breath. Here comes Marchand."

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Walter, as he entered the office. "Hope I am not intruding."

"Not at all, old fellow. Have a seat," said Butler. "We have been discussing political matters. I have ventured the suggestion to Pletcher that the coming city campaign would find an entire new ticket in the field."

"Indeed," said Walter, in a rather uninterested manner.

"What do you say about it, Marchand?" asked Pletcher.

"I know nothing about it, and can say nothing at this time," replied Walter.

"Would you be willing to head the new ticket, say for Mayor, if we could select suitable candidates right down the line?" asked Pletcher, speaking to Walter.

"What do you mean, when you use the word 'we'?" queried Walter.

"Well, you might construe it to mean a committee of the people."

"If the committee be appointed by the people, and after the selection is made, the candidates are indorsed by the people, I would not be averse to the proposition. But I would never consent to any dark lantern arrangement," replied Walter.

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"The people do not all take an interest in the selection of candidates for office," said Butler, "but depend upon those who put themselves forward for the purpose of bringing out the list of candidates, then the people make their selection from the list. If we were to call a mass meeting of the citizens for the purpose of making up a ticket, the people at the meeting would be absolutely at sea, as it were, unless there were leaders present to direct the proceedings, and, in the end, do just what a few can do at a little caucus. At any rate, whatever we do, if anything at all, must be more or less 'cut and dried,' as the saying goes, until our party is thoroughly organized. After that, we can arrange for general primaries for nominating purposes, in which every citizen may have a voice by the casting of his ballot."

"Now, you are beginning to get down to the rights of the people. Whenever we have a public primary election for the purpose of nominating our candidates for office, instead of the corrupt convention method, the people who ought to compose this government will then have a voice in the government," said Walter.

"I agree with you, Mr. Marchand," replied Pletcher; "besides, the convention system is too expensive for the man of small means."

"Not alone that," said Walter, "but under the convention system, a poor man can never hope to receive a nomination for an office of any consequence. The convention system is contrary to the primary principles of a democratic form of government, wherein all the people are component parts. Besides, conventions and convention methods have become so corrupt, so boss-ridden, so absolutely ruled and run by rings

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and bosses, that it has brought about the 'government by the few,' instead of government by the people."

"But there must be first created a sentiment, and that sentiment must be backed up by the votes of the people in the election of the very men who will produce and bring about the proper condition in the form of a law which will give to the people the primary election system, in the place of what we now have," said Butler.

"Certainly, there must be a beginning," returned Walter, as he picked up a newspaper and began scanning its pages, in a listless way.

"Well, are you not willing to join in the movement to either get control of the machinery of one of the local factions, or to put a new party in the field?" asked Pletcher, rather irritably.

"No, not if I am to be one of the 'cut and dried' nominees of the concern," replied Walter.

"Why, hang it all, man, the people expect you to take a leading part in the politics and management of affairs. They believe in you, they have confidence in your good judgment, your honesty and your ability. They will gladly follow your lead, as they have done and are doing. You can be useful to them, if you will," said Butler, rather impatiently.

"You are working upon a proposition that is a great deal harder to solve than you now imagine," replied Walter. "I realize that a fight against bossism in city affairs, in order to be successful, must be followed up by state laws, providing for a straight-out primary election system for the nomination of all candidates for public office, coupled with all the safeguards of a stringent election law. Without this,

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there will continue to exist the usual unfair and dishonest caucuses, conventions, and 'cut and dried' proceedings in which the people have but little, if any, part, but with which the boss with the big stick will disappear to a greater or less extent. I realize, also, that a condition, a real bad condition confronts us, and that all the theorizing and preaching we can do will amount to nothing without action. Action must be taken if the people are to ever come into their own rights, but can we make this plain fact understood?"

"Yes, by thunder, we can," roared Pletcher, who now saw the glimpse of a new light, a new world. He saw a condition where he would be the real leader of a new party, successful, perhaps, beyond his fondest hopes. A party stripped of deception, drudgery, slavery and fear. He would then be the master, whereas he had before been the slave. He would stalk out among his former masters and crack the lash over their backs. How they would wince and cringe at his feet! How they would then lick his hand and whimper like little puppies! Yes, there was but one road for him to take. Now was the very hour, the very minute to strike the hot iron and weld to it the steel of Marchand and Butler, which would be but the beginning. This was an opportunity now, and to let the golden moment pass without improving would be folly. Then rising to his feet, Pletcher continued:

"Boys, let me tell you what will win for the people, and win easy. First, I will set myself aright before the world, as a man convicted of wrong and converted to right. I am ready and willing to settle with the city, paying any and all just indebtedness I may owe, and shall use all due effort to compel others to do likewise. On that score I am now absolved from accusation. More, I want to see the city gov-

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erned by the officers whom the whole people shall nominate and elect. Walter is right when he says we must have law to afford the people their rights in this respect, and that there must be a beginning. Some two, three or more brave, honest, fearless men must start the movement, and once started, it will not stop if we use the proper methods. Sometimes the devil must be fought with fire. We may have to use fire in the beginning, or at least sound discretion. The Daily Clarion can be won over to our party, body and soul, for I now virtually own the majority of the stock and can procure sufficient of what remains to cinch that proposition.

"You know what it would mean for the Clarion and Telegram to strike out boldly for the cause of right, and on the side of the people. If you doubt my sincerity longer, for I see you were doubtful, please tell me what you require of me to remove your doubt."

"No, Pletcher, you have convinced me that you are in earnest. But bossism can not be subdued until the people realize the power and influence of their own individual and collective ballots. They can be made to understand this, it seems, only in the school of calamity," replied Walter.

"Oh, no," said Pletcher. "They can be made to see. The campaign of education which we shall invoke through the Telegram and the Clarion will do the work. We will then carry our campaign into the State Legislature, and, if you think it proper that I sacrifice myself upon the altar of my country's welfare, I'll submit my name for Representative, and, if elected, will strike a blow at bossism that will have a telling effect."

"Now, I know you have your heart in the cause," said Butler. "True reform can never come through the politi-

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cians, but must be forced by an awakened, conscientious public, acting through fearless, honest, intelligent and persevering public servants. Are you willing to join us now in the effort of reform, of which thus far obtained you are a part and parcel?" said Butler, directing the question to Walter.

"Yes, I suppose there is no other way. I will admit that I have become discouraged with the lack of interest on the part of the people. They seem to feel that by taking a little spurt and electing one man to office, that he will revolutionize the whole world. But it takes more than the public officer. It requires the constant backing up of the officer by the people."

"Well, old fellow," said Pletcher, "you have done more good than you think for, even alone in your work, as you thought. You have reformed me, and you have whipped the Mayor and every Councilman into silent submission to the payment of their back taxes. Your dogged tenacity and fearless integrity in office have given the people the courage to believe that there is some honor in public officials, if the right man is selected. The ring leaders and political bosses are nonplussed right now, so that they have not the courage to take a bold stand against you or any other man who declares himself for honest government. No, sir, my boy, you little know the vast good you have done, and you probably never will fully know."

"I am mighty glad we happened, by chance as it were, to meet here and fall into this friendly compact," said Butler, slyly winking on the side to Marchand. "But since it has occurred, and has resulted so nicely, let us not lose any time in extending our preparations. Suppose you acquire suf-

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ficient stock in the Clarion, Mr. Pletcher, to make up a two-thirds ownership, and I will relieve you of a part of it. Then suppose we have a meeting tomorrow afternoon, inviting several of the strong, plain, honest people who have had little to do with politics in the past. Afterwards we can extend our circle by rapid degrees. When all is in readiness, then let the thunders roar and the lightnings flash."

"It is a go," replied Pletcher with delight, "and the Storm King shall rage."

"Well," said Walter, rather amusedly, and with dry humor, "don't you think a little earthquaking would help the cause?"

GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE

CHAPTER XXI.

GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE.

LeBerte Marchand had not been as happy of late years as he had hoped for, nor as he made appear upon the surface. There was ample cause for his silent, inward grief. He had seen his son and daughter grow to manhood and womanhood, knowing there existed between them a unity of holy love, not the love of brother and sister, and which, perhaps, precluded a kindred relation between either of them and any other living soul. Both were rapidly passing that stage in their lives when they would most likely form an attachment for another, if such could ever occur under the circumstances.

It was a strange case indeed. LeBerte Marchand had looked on and hoped, year by year, that either Edith or Walter would form a close attachment for another, or that something would occur to break the spell that held them inseparably bound together. Poor old man! He could not be held accountable for the strange condition between the two children, now grown up. He could not be expected to announce to them and to the world that they were not brother and sister; that Walter was not his son. Even the closest friends and neighbors of the old gentleman did not know the facts as they truly existed. They believed, as they had a right to believe, that Walter was the son, the blood and bone of LeBerte Marchand. To announce to the contrary at this

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late day would be to invite disbelief, suspicion, and rife speculation as to his family affairs. That, he could not find in his heart to permit. He could not now, after all these years, face his children with the truth that they were not brother and sister. They would scorn him for this deception. He would lose their love; they would turn away from him in his old age, and he would be left alone with his sorrow and their curses to attend him on his rapid decline to the grave.

It was, indeed, a matter that afforded good grounds for argument upon both sides. Edith and Walter were so wrapped up in each other's love and affection that no barrier had, so far, made its way between them. They were both well matured, and both realized that time was rapidly passing by, time which both should be improving, perhaps, around the hearthstone of their own separate firesides. Each realized that fact, and frequently did they confidentially discuss the question. But they could not, so intensely interesting were they, each to the other, obtain the consent of their own minds and hearts to break the loving ties that bound them.

Little did they dream that the same blood did not flow in their veins. There had been moments in Walter's earlier days when the faint glimpse of old "Aunt Dinah" flashed across his memory, but it was only a fleeting glimpse. Yes, and in a sort of dreamy, hazy manner did the shadow of a little golden locket float before his vision, but it had been only a passing shadow. As years swept on, those fleeting visions and passing shadows grew less frequent, and finally the curtain of forgetfulness dropped down over the events of the past, blotting them from his memory forever, unless,

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per chance, they should be revived by a chain of circumstances and incidents which the future might hold in store.

"Who knows but that they are happier as brother and sister than they ever could be as husband and wife?" said LeBerte Marchand to himself, at intervals, as he witnessed the loving tenderness between Edith and Walter. "However much I might desire to reveal the truth, I would not dare to do so now, for many reasons. Having grown up and lived together as brother and sister, they could never harmonize as husband and wife. There would be an entire lack of novelty and romance in their lives.

"It would be beyond the bounds of reason to ever presume upon their mutual happiness as husband and wife. Then, what explanation could be made to the public, to society? Besides, Walter is in politics, and his enemies would contort the truth into ten thousand cruel, infamous lies. They would ruin my children, my wife and myself, filling our peaceful and happy lives with sorrow, sending me to my grave, perhaps in disgrace. O God, grant that my secret may be carried with me to the grave, and there be forever hidden, as shall be my earthly body."

Whatever may be the opinion of the reader as to the course that should have been pursued, certain it was that LeBerte Marchand followed the course which he deemed best. Whatever the distress of mind caused by the existing conditions, certain it was, that to reveal the truth now would bring greater mental distress, not only to LeBerte Marchand, but to all concerned. Existing conditions were brought about by fate. There was no planning, scheming or conniving on the part of Marchand. The course of events was perfectly

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natural, and there could be no criticism offered to the conduct of those concerned, perhaps.

Sometimes fate is cruel; sometimes it is kindly. Fate is something over which no man has the least control. If fate had been kind to the Marchands in supplying their home with the much needed child, why should Marchand, after all these years, proclaim to the world that Walter was not his son? Fate gave to him a noble son, and, if the son were to ever be torn from him, it must be the work of fate. On that point, Marchand had become well determined. Having finally and fully determined upon this course, he endeavored to free his mind from the oft recurring thoughts by giving more attention to business affairs than had of late been his custom.

When the case of the strange old man, as related in a previous chapter, was brought to his firm, LeBerte Marchand became quite interested, and devoted himself to an extended research into the mysteries of the affair, so far as was possible under the circumstances. It will be remembered that his client could speak not a word of any language that was understood by any one in the city or country around, though weeks were spent in searching for some such person. One peculiar circumstance connected with the strange old man's affair puzzled Marchand more than one would have thought. Attached to the leathern belt which surrounded his body was a brass button, bearing the impress of an eagle and the letters, "U. S.," all of which characters were almost obliterated by the ravages of time. The button was readily recognized as a United States army button, but how it came into the possession of this strange

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old man was as much a mystery as was the place whence the man himself came.

The fact that the strange old man had been picked up off the Florida coast, following a severe storm, did not bear any significance to the average person learning that fact. To LeBerte Marchand it would not have borne the least significance except for the fact that he had been somewhat interested in a former report to the effect that a peculiar race of people inhabited the Everglades of Florida. He had gathered such information as was obtainable and had concluded that the report was without foundation. His interest in the subject was revived, however, by the peculiarities of the case in question.

The fact that the strange old man spoke a language unknown to all classes and nationalities represented in and about the City of New Orleans, was sufficient to stimulate his former belief that it was barely possible that the Everglades were inhabited. True, no person had ever succeeded in making a personal tour throughout these great swamps. That was given up to be an utter impossibility. Many persons had ventured a short distance into the Glades but returned with the conviction that no human being could thoroughly traverse them, while others who made the attempt were never heard from, and what their fate may have been could only be surmised.

To LeBerte Marchand the mystery surrounding the old man was of no greater interest than was the peculiar character of the estate or fortune, consisting of a large collection of the most valuable pearls. It appeared wholly incredible that this strange being should be possessed of such an estate. In value, there could be but the merest guess by any one

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not well versed in the jewelry market. Those who made pretensions of knowing variously estimated the value up into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. But such estimates were merely guesses.

It was sufficient for the Marchands and Butler to know that the strange old man was being deprived of a part of his property, no matter what the value. They were not prompted to defend and protect his rights by a spirit of avarice. They knew, of course, that they would be compensated, but the work had been undertaken by Butler, prompted by a spirit of fair dealing with the old man, and at a time when there could have been no knowledge, upon his part, of this untold wealth.

The Marchands were interested in the matter, first, on account of their friend Butler, and would have rendered their services gratuitously, had it appeared necessary. Such were the feelings and friendship betwixt them. The development of the fact that in connection with the matter there was great compensation, no doubt, stimulated the energies of the Marchands. That would be natural.

It was to be expected that a long-drawn-out legal warfare would be waged in the courts, touching the right to the possession and the rightful ownership of the part of the estate sought to be held, and claimed by the Captain and the owner of the tramp steamer. True enough, had the Captain discovered and captured the jewels upon the high seas, alone, and without a claimant in possession of them, he might have had a right to them. But the circumstances were different. Indeed, had he not rescued the old man with the jewels at the time he did, might not the old man and the jewels both been lost forever at the bottom of

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the sea? There were two sides to the question. The Marchands did not dispute that fact, but they did deny the right of the rescuer to take more of the estate than in common fairness would be equitable and just.

In consequence of the contention between the parties, the court ordered that the portion of the estate in question be turned into the registry of the court to await the results of the litigation. Owing to the fact that the plaintiff could not speak a known language, and that the defendant was compelled to continue his trips across the ocean, there was little promise of an early ending of the litigation. It might be months, even years, before the matter would be finally determined by the courts. In the mean time, the estate should be cared for under orders of the court, and the Captain could continue his business, while the strange old man would remain an interesting character, a subject for study, and, perhaps, a guide to a world of wealth greater far, than of the fabulous Monte Christo.

But the old man was the special charge of Joe Butler. It was only proper and right that Butler should take especial interest in the old fellow whom he had discovered, and to whom he was the first to offer protection. Nor was it an unpleasant task for Joe Butler. He was of that tender nature and kindly disposition that found pleasure in doing good unto others. Of course, many there were who imagined, and even remarked, that Butler was especially interested in the old man, "just for the sake of his wealth," and, "that Butler would get it all." Butler knew that such remarks would be made, if for nothing but political revenge. But he cared little about that. He knew there were very many people in this world whose souls were so pinched, warped and weazened,

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that they would envy any man the pleasure he found even in the hope of reward beyond the grave. Butler had long before learned that one's life is too short to heed the vampirings of those little poison-spitters, and he would stride through an army of them with total disregard rather than veer his course or check his speed.

Therefore, night after night, week after week and month after month, Butler was to be found in the company of the strange old man. People wondered what he meant by it, but he had nothing to give out to the public. Besides, he enforced a strict compliance with the rule, that no person should be permitted to see the old man or to be admitted to his apartments in the sanitarium, except upon Butler's written permission or at a time when he was present. This was a necessary provision for several good reasons, one of which was that Butler was playing the role of teacher and instructor, and to have permitted the curiously inclined access would have made his efforts less effective.

Butler was not long in concluding that the old man had, at some former time, been an educated and refined American citizen, but under what circumstances and conditions he had retrograded into his present state, was a problem which time alone, perhaps, could solve. Butler persevered, however, and by and by, the light of intelligence began beaming in the old man's eyes. The evidences of the fact that he began to understand Butler's speech were frequently apparent. This was encouraging to Butler, but he said little about it to any one, except his close friend Walter Marchand.

As time passed by, the elder Marchand deferred the active work and practice to the other members of his firm, com-

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posed now of his son Walter and several other young men of ability whom the Marchands had, from time to time, admitted, but the firm name of Marchand and Marchand was still retained, while frequently the firm was referred to as "The Marchands." The elder Marchand now restricted his work to office consultation, seldom appearing in the courts.

The case of the strange old man, generally referred to as the "Pearl case," had progressed by slow degrees, until it was deemed expedient that a guardian be appointed to take care of the valuable property comprising the estate. That would insure the safety of the estate, while the litigation could proceed at will and in no manner be affected by the guardianship. Besides, there were other good and sufficient reasons for the appointment of a guardian, all of which were presented to the court. But who should be the guardian? That was the question with which Butler was greatly concerned.

It was not everybody who could give the bond that would be required of the guardian, in this case. There could be but few persons that to Butler would be acceptable. Certainly he hoped that no guardian would meddle and interfere between the man and himself, for he was progressing too nicely for such interference. After Butler and Walter had gone over the situation thoroughly, they both agreed that LeBerte Marchand would be an eminently fit and proper person to be appointed as the guardian of the strange old man's estate.

"He will be just the very person to have appointed, Walter," said Butler, "if we can obtain his consent."

"We can obtain his consent, I think, for there will be no work for him to do. We will look after all the details.

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The estate is composed of jewels alone, and those can be safely kept in a thorough burglar and fireproof safe, so there will be no danger of loss. Here comes father now. We will arrange matters at once."

For the sake of brevity, it may be simply stated that in the due course of procedure, LeBerte Marchand was duly and legally appointed and confirmed as the guardian of the estate of the "Strange Old Man."

THE SECOND BATTLE

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SECOND BATTLE.

The second battle of municipal politics, in which Walter Marchand was a leading character, had now begun. The good citizens of the city were encouraged by the course pursued by their fearless, honest and efficient City Attorney, and they desired to show their appreciation by placing Walter Marchand at the head of the executive department of the city government. To this arrangement Walter consented, on the condition, however, that there should be placed upon the ticket with him, good men for the heads of departments and for the Council, or legislative department. He realized how helpless the Mayor would be were that officer not surrounded by an official staff, all working in harmony. The people also realized that the good work of the City Attorney, unless followed up, would avail but little, and that the future would bring the direst of results.

Whatever the past, it had been sufficient to show to the people of New Orleans one thing. It showed that there was a necessity for individual interest in municipal politics, manifested by individual energy.

The people had observed the bad effect of individual lethargy in municipal politics. They had failed to exercise their individual right in assisting to nominate men who would

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make efficient, honest, public servants. That privilege was left to the political bosses. With the selection of candidates for public office, the people had little or nothing to do, and that was a serious mistake. In refusing to exercise their greatest American privilege, the people thereby turned the government over to the political bosses who ran the government for the benefit of the favored few. Thus, in the course of time, the government became corrupt, and, in the school of calamity, the people learned the truth of the statement, that: "The government will be just as bad as the people will permit it to be, or just as good as the people will make it."

Ere the ring bosses knew what was going on, Pletcher, Butler, Marchand, and a number of others of more or less political influence, had the plans of the campaign well laid. The bold and defiant announcement of a public mass meeting of the citizens for the purpose of nominating a municipal ticket that would insure better local government came like a bolt of thunder from a clear sky to the old political leaders and bosses. The greatest surprise was the fact that The Daily Clarion had gone over into the ranks of the "reformers," as they were called, body and soul. It had joined hands with The Daily Telegram, and the struggle for a cleaner government was, thereby, almost won.

"That was the greatest stroke of political policy that could have been made," said the friends of the movement, while the members of the old ring declared there was a "nigger in the wood pile."

The announcement called for a meeting of the citizens, regardless of party affiliation, stating that the best interests of the city were above party fealty, and that nominations should be made regardless of party affiliation. The

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only requirement, necessary to participation in the convention, would be a declaration of sincere desire for a clean and honest municipal government. Those who would not so declare, were not expected at the convention.

The Clarion and Telegram also requested the citizens to send in the names of those whom they preferred for Mayor, all of which would be published for the information of the people. The responses to this suggestion were a splendid index to the sentiment of the people. There was no longer any guessing at results. The two dailies were literally swamped with telephone calls, postal cards and letters bearing messages of the people's preference for Mayor. The preference of those who responded was almost unanimous for Walter Marchand, and the publication of this fact stimulated the people to greater activity in the movement.

The ring leaders of the two old factions, the McBride and Wilkins, were nonplussed. They had seen their political power and prestige waning from day to day, and they appeared powerless to prevent it. They employed all the arts to them known in politics, but without avail. They were simply wrong, and they knew it. They had hoodwinked the people for years. Now the people asserted their own individual rights and privileges, whereas, formerly they had left political affairs in the hands of the politicians. The old ring leaders found themselves in the midst of a period when the rights of the people were to be observed and exercised for the common good of the community; when the reign of special privileges would be brought to an end, and the doctrine of equal rights would be fixed in the minds and hearts of the citizens.

True, the McBride and the Wilkins factions, which had for

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years, alternately, controlled the politics of the city, preached the doctrine of equal rights, but practiced it little. The doctrine of equal rights to all and special privileges to none was a good platform to get into office on, and it was the slogan of all former campaigns, back to the time when the memory of the oldest citizen runneth not. But the doctrine was never put into practice. This truth, the people well knew. The more astute ones of the two old factions well reckoned that the people had observed the situation.

Bitter as the leaders of the McBride and Wilkins factions were against each other, they but exemplified the truth of the old saying, that: "Politics sometimes make strange bed-fellows." The movement for a people's ticket became a very popular one, and there was no room for the two opposing factions, so the two old factions buried the hatchet, kissed, and made up, as the saying goes. This they did, for the sake of the dear old party, so they said, and it is fair to presume that some of their members really believed it to be true.

The Daily Trumpet was not molested by the members of the new combination. It was simply ignored by the other two "respectable" daily papers, and the silent contempt was more bitter than wormwood and gall. The Daily Trumpet fretted, raged, appealed to the people in its frantic efforts to retain its former political prestige. But it was all in vain. It warned the people against the Marchand-Butler-Pletcher combination, and predicted that, if the new combination went into power, it would be the ruination of the city. More, it would mean the domination of local politics by the nigger. At all such extravagant assertions the people but laughed, and, as they laughed, the Trumpet fretted the more.

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No one enjoyed the excitement of the battle more than did John Pletcher. He knew the temper and the sentiment of the people. He was out among the people all the time, and he was in a position to judge of the situation. He boldly talked of his conversion to the right, and how he wanted to see others made to do justice. He had a just right to talk, and the people believed him. He was running for no office, wanted no office, but he did want honest, fearless men in the offices. He took a special delight in calling on his former bosses and political masters. They were not inclined kindly towards him, but he cared little about that. In fact, he rather enjoyed the attitude assumed by his former co-conspirators, for it gave him a better opportunity to speak freely and frankly to them. If they recalled past deeds not wholly commendable, they were reminded that he had reformed. He admitted that his past record, in conjunction with theirs, was not clean, but he had reformed, and hoped they would do likewise. He suggested to his old-time political bosses that those who would not reform voluntarily would do so, later, involuntarily. John Pletcher was in earnest, and he believed what he preached. The people knew that, and they believed with him.

So earnest were Pletcher and Butler in their effort to obtain a set of city officials that would guarantee a cleaner government, that they had little trouble in procuring the consent of good men to allow their names to be placed upon the ticket, and the selections so made, were made without regard to former party alliances. Each ward held its own mass meeting and indorsed the aldermen so selected, the results being published in the two friendly papers. When the various aldermen were thus selected, they were called

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together, and with their aid the selections were made for the various heads of the departments. Then came the general mass meeting of the people of the whole city, that is, the legal voters of the city, for those who were not entitled to vote in the election were not permitted a voice in the mass meeting. If there had been excitement and enthusiasm in the previous municipal battle, the present campaign gave evidence of redoubled vigor and energy. The distinguishing difference was, that in the present struggle, the whole citizenship was interested, whereas, before, it was a battle of Walter Marchand against the politicians and political hangers-on, the grafters, the ward heelers and the filchers.

As the forces lined up in battle array, there were observed, upon the one side, Walter Marchand and his ticket, all of whom were selected by the people in a plain, unostentatious manner, and each man upon that ticket pledged to afford equal rights to all citizens. This ticket was supported by all the citizens who wanted that doctrine put into actual practice.

The opposing hosts were headed by Charles McBride and his ticket, composed of politicians selected from the two old factions. This ticket was supported by those who had for years received special favors at the hands of the government. Among the supporters of the McBride ticket were also to be found the ward heelers, the grafters and filchers. They intuitively knew where, by right, they belonged. There was no boodle, no graft, no corruption in the new party. and, of course, the army of campaign boodlers found no consolation there, consequently they fell into the ranks of the McBride-Wilkins combination.

No one knew these political pilferers better than did

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Pletcher, consequently they were refused admission to the convention of the people. Not only they, but likewise the special agents and pliant tools of the McBride and Wilkins combination who were sent to the mass meeting for no good purpose, were excluded. The convention, therefore, was composed of the representative people of the city regardless of political parties, political alliances or party fealty. The one object was honest government for the people.

There was but little speech-making at the convention. The people knew what they were there for. No one needed instruction on that point. It was a sort of family reunion. Each felt that his presence there was as important as that of his neighbor, but not more so. Each felt that spirit of community of interest which makes cool, calm, deliberate action for the common good. Each felt glad that his neighbors were present and interested. There was no spirit of envy, malice, hatred or spite exhibited. The political sore-heads and enemies were all in the ranks of the old factions. They were not wanted in this, the people's convention. The people realized what great harm is done to a city by sore-headed, envious, spite-breeding political factions in municipal government. They knew that many a promising young city had gone to ruin and decay on that account. They could look over the country and count such municipal corpses by the score, and they now felt rejoiced that at last their fair and promising city was about to cast off her shackles and fetters, so that when the convention was called to order, a spirit of common interest and common welfare permeated the vast assemblage.

Joe Butler was in charge of the affairs of the mass meeting. It seemed natural that he should be in charge, for no

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person had shown more zeal in the good cause, of which Walter Marchand was the leader, than had Joe Butler. The audience knew that, and the audience showed its appreciation by loud and continued applause. Butler arose and requested order. When silence had been restored, Butler briefly reviewed the work of reform that had been begun and prosecuted under the leadership of their friend, Walter Marchand, and outlined the work that had been done up to the time of the convention. He then stated:

"Now, fellow citizens, the furtherance of the good cause is in your hands. Whatever action you may take, it will be the act of our whole people. We, who have worked and toiled to place the government of our city in the hands of the people, here and now turn over to you the fruits of our toil. What shall your pleasure be?"

No sooner had Butler finished speaking than calls for Walter Marchand came from every part of the great assemblage of citizens. Walter remembered how he had stood before his first political audience two years previous with scarcely an idea other than that of official integrity. Two years of actual warfare with political enemies had broadened his views, had opened his political eyes. It had been a great school, indeed, and Walter Marchand had been a close student. He experienced no fear, no misgivings, no trepidation, now. In the fullest of confidence, Walter Marchand began:

"My fellow citizens, I congratulate you upon the manifest interest you have in the matter of a better government for our fair and promising city. I congratulate the people for their timely advance to the rescue of our government from the hands of the ring of politicians who have made it a

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government for and by the few. A city is best governed when that government is by the whole people; when in truth and in fact there are special favors to none, and when all have equal rights, and those rights are exercised. The poorest among you is entitled to equal favors with every other citizen, be he poor or rich, high or low, laborer or merchant. The richest among you should be made to feel the lash of justice in the same degree with his less prosperous neighbor, and all should be willing to do exact justice to our government.

"It is the failure on the part of the people to see to it, that these conditions are allowed to exist. I have before stated the government of a municipality will be just what the people make it, and, because of the truth of that statement, the people generally deserve just about what they get in the way of municipal government.

"Whatever you may have deserved in the past, I am glad to know that you have at last determined that a reform shall be brought about. It will be but short-lived, however, unless the whole people shall remain active and keep a close watch.

"You have been informed of the work that has been done to bring about the present movement. You are expected to take charge of this meeting, nominate the men whom you wish for your leaders, and elect them to the offices. For my own part, I should like to see the following conditions brought about in our city:

"Paved streets, good sidewalks, better sanitation, strict payment of all city taxes, better moral restrictions, a cleaner police department, the cessation of the miscellaneous sale of poisonous drugs, a reasonable observance of the Sabbath, a primary election for the nomination of candidates, in which

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the people would have a voice, a strict practice of equal rights to all and special privileges to none.

"Should I be so fortunate as to serve you further, I would be pleased to know that each and every officer in our city government shall stand for these principles, and, if they shall, I promise you a government of, for and by the people. The whole matter is now with the people."

The storm of applause that followed, as Marchand retired to a seat, was indicative of the enthusiasm of the people. Butler brought about the formal organization of the convention under cover of that enthusiasm with such tact and grace as would do credit to the most artful politician. Then turning the gavel over to the permanent chairman, Butler gently bowed and passed out into the assembly in a manner that plainly seemed to say: "Now, the people are at the helm, let the old ship sail."

"The next thing in order is the nomination for Mayor," said the chairman.

A motion was made, by a citizen who had been accustomed to "railroading" in political conventions, that a nominating committee be appointed. Butler at once obtained the attention of the chairman and said:

"No doubt my good friend from the Sixth Ward means well, but, if he will consider that this is a mass meeting of the whole people and not of any particular party, he will recognize the fact that nominations should be made openly, upon the floor of this convention, and by any and every one who wishes to make or second a nomination." This statement was received with loud applause, and the citizen from the Sixth Ward withdrew his motion.

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"Are there any nominations for Mayor?" said the chairman.

John Pletcher arose and began to speak as follows:

"I wish to place in nomination for the office of Mayor, a man who has proven himself a fearless, honest officer. A man —"

"Walter Marchand," cried the audience as with one accord. There was no use for Pletcher to make further attempt at speech: the audience had nominated Marchand. He was the unanimous choice of the great assemblage, and he would be the choice of the whole people of the city.

In rapid order were the other officers nominated, just as had been planned by Butler, Pletcher and a few others, and the mass meeting adjourned, the people feeling that they had done a great work. And, indeed, they had. It was the first time in many a year that the people, the common, everyday people, had had anything to do with the nomination of their public officers. Of course, some of the people had attended the conventions, but they were not consulted and did nothing more than look on. The political bosses did the rest.

The battle royal was now on. The Daily Trumpet howled and raged at the pretended convention of the people—called it a sham, makeshift, conceived and planned to fool the people. The people were satisfied, however, and laughed at the antics of the Trumpet. The old political factions, now consolidated, labored hard by day and by night, but little headway could they make. The more abuse they heaped upon the people's ticket, the more friends they made for it. The friends of the people's ticket were confident, but they did not

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lie down on their guns. They remained at the front and did noble battle to the last ditch.

When the election was over, and the smoke of the battle had cleared away, it was found that Marchand and his entire ticket had been elected by a larger majority than that of Marchand's election two years before, and thus, in the second battle of the people a great victory had been won.

OLD AUNT DINAH

CHAPTER XXIII.

OLD AUNT DINAH.

A few days after the election, as related in the previous chapter, Joe Butler was startled from a reverie by the appearance at his office door of an aged and somewhat infirm negro woman. At a glance, Butler recognized in her a species of the old time darky, for which the true Southerner has due and gentle respect.

"Come in, Auntie. What can I do for you?"

"Thank yo' sah; thank yo', thank yo'," said the old darky, as she bowed low and made due obeisance. "I'se bin look-in for Marse Butler, but I doan 'specks I'se gwine to fine him, 'kase its bin a mighty long time sence I seed him."

"What Butler are you looking for, Aunty?"

"Why, Marse Will'm Butler, my old marse, o' course."

"Where did your old master live, Auntie?"

"Oh, we all lived ovah in Alabama afoh de wah, but Marse Butler done set all us niggahs free 'bout de breakin' out ob de wah, den me an' my ole man went to Tennessee. I neber did know what b'come ob my ole man, so aftah de wah I went back to my ole marse and lived thar a long time. Den I done marrad a fool no 'count niggah, and we moved heah to New Orleans. I'sc bin hearing a heap 'bout Marse Butler 'round heah, an' I didn't know it mout be my ole

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marse, so I keeps huntin' fer him, 'kase I wants to see him afoh I dies."

"Why bless your good old soul, Aunt Dinah, your old master has been dead for many a long year."

"See heah, young man, how yo' knows my name's Aunt Dinah—yo' haint neber seed me afoh, has yo'?"

"Oh, yes. You are my old black mammy. You took care of me when I was a little baby. I am Joe Butler, son of your old master."

"Hallelujah! glory, glory, glory, I done foun' my young marse. Glory to de Lam'," shouted the old darky as she clapped her hands for joy and shambled around the room.

"Well, Aunt Dinah, I am real glad to see you once more," said Butler for the purpose of restoring quiet. "I suppose you are married and have a big family."

"Naw, sah; naw, sah. I doan pestah 'round wif none ob dese new fangled niggahs. Dey haint no 'count, no how. I done had my sat'sfaction wif dem lazy, stuck up niggahs. Naw, sah. I done bin married six times, reglar, an' none ob 'em wasn't no 'count, so I jes wo'ks 'roun' fo' myself. Dats what I does, Marse Butler. Bless de Lawd, I sho' is glad I done foun' my young marse. I knows I'se gwine to git a Chris'mus pres'nt now."

"To be sure, Auntie, and I will find you a good place to work, where you will have a home and be comfortable, too. I know you will like that."

"Yessah, Marse Butler, I suttently'll. I done los' my little ole home, 'kase I couldn't pay de taxes, an' sence den I'se bin wo'kin' 'round f'um place to place, best I could."

"All right, Aunt Dinah, now you take this letter down to the. Sanitarium on Carondelet street, and you will

OLD AUNT DINAH

be shown what to do until I come. I will be there in a little while. Now, go straight there, Auntie, do you hear?"

"Yessah, yessah, Marse Butler, I sho'ly will go right dar dis blessed minute. Praise de Lawd, bless de Holy Lam'," said the old darky as she bowed and shambled out of the office, going on her way, rejoiced that she had found her old friend.

"Strange how bad pennies will turn up," said Butler to Walter Marchand, who entered the office as the old darky passed out. "That old darky was, before the war, one of my father's slaves. She was my old nurse, and we all thought a great deal of her. My father realized that in the end the niggers would be liberated, so about a year after the war broke out, he liberated all of his slaves of his own accord. I was a mere baby, and this old darky was my 'black mammy' as we called her in those days. Her husband was a trifling fellow, and though Aunt Dinah vigorously protested leaving our plantation, the rascal carried her off to some town in Tennessee, and we heard no more from her until about six or seven years after the war was over, when she came back to us, and we gave her a good home as long as she stayed with us.

"After awhile, I went away to college. That was where I first met you. I had been in college about two or three years when you first came there. Well, old Aunt Dinah finally picked up with some tramp of a nigger, got married, and left. We never heard any more of her, and I thought she had been dead years ago, but here she turns up, after all these years, just like a bad penny. Strange, isn't it?"

"Yes, it seems a little strange that the old darkey should

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still be living, she seems a hundred years old. Well, it but adds another care upon your hands."

"Certainly, but do you know, Walter, I am glad to see her. Yes, and if necessary, I will work my hands off to take care of the old darky. I never see one of those 'old black mammys' but that my heart goes out in sympathy for them. I feel that it is my duty to care for Aunt Dinah as long as she lives, and I'll do it, too. I suppose you still remember your 'old black mammy,' don't you?"

"Why, really, Joe, I am not certain. It seems, at times, I fancy that I can faintly hear a crooning lullaby and see a kind, old, colored face bending over me, that was once a reality, but when I try to recall it to memory, the image fades away and is lost. I suppose my early life was so pleasant, and so filled with happy incidents, except for a time at my mother's death, that the recollections of my babyhood days have slipped from my memory forever."

"If you were born and brought up in this city, the chances are that you had the care of an 'old black mammy,' but not, perhaps, to the extent that we of the country had. It does me good, sometimes, to see an old colored mammy singing and crooning over a baby. There seems to be something in her voice that reaches the embryo soul of the infant, and which brings peace and contentment when nothing else will. There is something wierd about her crooning, a simplicity, a strangeness that is fascinating. Her lullabys are always original in character and peculiar to the individual. I shall never forget one of the lullabys which my 'old black mammy' used to croon to me. It went something like this:"

Butler began a droll crooning, an excellent mimicry of



(FROM PHOTO BY J. MOODY DAWSON)

"OLD AUNT DINAH."

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the old-time darky nurse, which at once arrested Marchand's attention, then deeply affected him, as Butler proceeded.

"Go on, Joe, go on forever," said Walter, with a pained expression on his face. "Go on, until the flood-gates of forgetfulness are thrown wide and the tide of memory rushes in upon me, bringing back the recollection of my childhood days. I have heard that old lullaby some time and somewhere, but where?"

"Oh, no doubt, your old black mammy sang it to you. The imagery of those old darkies is wonderful, and their lullabys are strikingly similar. Strange, though, that you should so completely and utterly forget your nursery days. Some time the memory of those days will rush back upon you like a flood. But it is of little importance, as your life is before you, and nothing depends upon the events of your babyhood days."

"Yes, I suppose you are right. Sometimes, though, I don't feel that I am in a sphere where I, by rights, belong. Sometimes I feel that I am not who I really am. Not that, exactly, but I do not know just how to express myself."

"Well, old fellow, you are all right, but you have simply over-worked yourself. That is what is the matter with you. You should take a little trip out west, somewhere, and relieve yourself of the strain you are constantly undergoing. You take public life too seriously. You are too easily annoyed at the common and ordinary political thrusts and side-cuts in which many people indulge with the same abandon as they do about the lawyer, as a lawyer. You know everybody feels a perfect liberty to make side-thrusts at lawyers, as lawyers. It seems to be a common practice,

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now-a-days, and the people are falling into the habit of referring to all public officials, in the same way."

"Well, it is wrong. It is a great injustice to refer to the legal profession, as a profession, in any other than a respectful manner. As a class, the lawyers are as honest as any other class on earth, the preachers, or ministers of the gospel, not excepted."

"I thoroughly agree with you, old fellow."

"It is as unjust to the public official to have the many uncalled for remarks and insinuations made against him, as a public officer, as it is against the lawyer. It ought not to be so. It has a very bad effect upon the morals of the community. It not only impresses the young and rising generation with the idea that all public officials are scoundrels, but it discourages honest men from taking an interest in the affairs of our government. Another phase of the practice is, that when a good man has been elected to office, and later he discovers that his good name is being bandied about, and that he is suspected and accused of unholy things, he sometimes becomes angered to the point of desperation, and then seeks the unholy gains with which he is unjustly suspicioned and accused."

"There is no doubt about the evil resulting from the unwarranted and pernicious habit of some of the people casting insinuations and reflections against public officials. And the more shame of it all is that some of our best citizens, who really know better, have fallen into the practice. They do not stop to think of the evil effect of it. They do it in a sort of jesting way, as if the people expected every public officer to turn rascal and thief as soon as he gets into office."

"Well, there is another class of people who make a practice

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of slandering public officials, merely for the love of the practice. They are, as a rule, crooked curs, and can see no good in anyone. They are disturbers, and slanderers by habit, and damned rascals by nature. For them, there should be placed in every honest man's hand a whip, 'to lash the rascals naked through the world.' "

"By the way, Walter, there appears to be considerable protesting against the 'Trilby Theater Band' parading our streets, advertising the variety show and dance house."

"Yes, several of my friends have casually remarked to me that there should be a stop put to the practice."

"Have you ever been in that place?"

"No, but I understand it is of a low order, and that the morals of the place are very bad. You, being a newspaper man, ought to know. How about it?"

"Thank you. I can not recommend the place. There are some clever performances, poor singing, high-priced beer, female costumes short at both ends, dancing, drinking, drunkenness, robbery, pocket-picking, and everything that is calculated to send a man to hell as rapidly as is possible for one to travel in that direction."

"Do you mean to say that the brass band is sent out upon our streets to advertise that place, and to flaunt such indecency into the faces of our people?"

"Well, the band comes out twice a day to advertise the 'Trilby Theater.' It's been doing that for a number of years. I suppose the place is a source of revenue to the city, as well as to those connected with it."

"Revenue or no revenue, that public advertising of immorality and indecency must be stopped."

"What are you going to do about it?"

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"I am going to stop it at once. I will not only stop the public advertising, but the immoral show must shut down. These fellows shall not longer continue to flaunt their indecency and immorality in the faces of our women and children upon the public streets of the city."

"I presume a city license has been issued, under which the show is being operated."

"If so, the license shall be revoked."

"It might not be best to make too many reforms, right in the very outset of your administration. This suggestion is in pure friendship."

"Certainly, I understand. However, I shall look only to my official duty. I care not for the carping of the critics. When you deal with crime, you must not temporize, but strike it down—stop it. It is often different when dealing with other matters. Every indecent show or immoral exhibition is an outrage upon the public morals of a community, and should be immediately suppressed."

"I understand there is no way to suppress it, that the power in the city charter is inadequate."

"That does not matter. The common law is adequate. Whenever any public show or exhibition is of such character as tends to corrupt society, it is subject to prosecution under the common law, for the conduct of such show or exhibition is, of itself, a breach of the peace. Any act or conduct on the part of an individual or aggregation of individuals, calculated to corrupt the public morals, or outrage the sense of public decency, are offenses against the public and are subject to criminal prosecution."

"The suppression of crime, and of nuisances such as are injurious to the public morals, is the first and most im-

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portant duty of government. A public officer is nothing more nor less than a servant of the government, and if he fail to perform that duty he is a traitor to the government, and a menace to the people who compose the government. As the Mayor of this city, I shall not sit idly and allow such notorious outrages to continue."

. "Well, Walter, you are eminently correct in theory. I glory in your determination to put down vice and crime, but I must remind you that our good friend John Bently is the proprietor of that theatre."

"What difference should that make? I do not care who the proprietor may be. John Bently shall have no more legal right to operate a den of iniquity in this city than shall have my bitterest foe."

"And there is our friend, the druggist, Mr. Johnson, who owns the theater building and no doubt draws a high rental therefor."

"So much more the shame for our fair city. Johnson's father is a highly respected minister of the gospel, and Johnson himself, a rich and highly esteemed citizen. Johnson has a few little drug joints down in the shady part of the city, where there is dispensed poison without let or hindrance, until there has grown up an army of 'dope fiends' swarming our streets, the creation of Johnson's drug joints. Every dollar he has thus obtained from those joints represents so much life blood, moral stamina, man and womanhood, that has been drained from the lives and souls of those poor, miserable creatures, who fill the night with hideous cries and unearthly screams while crazed with Johnson's poisons. Shall I, as Mayor of this city, sit idly and let this

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horrible condition grow still more horrible? Not on your life."

"Old fellow, you are all right in principle, but you are too impulsive, too hasty. You will accomplish better results if you try to bring about these reforms by degrees. It takes time to make these reforms effectual and permanent."

"Say, Butler, if you were to meet a poisonous snake in the road, and you knew there were a lot of innocent children near by who were likely to be bitten by it, what would you do?"

"I would kill the snake, of course."

"How would you go about it?"

"Why, I would simply kill the snake. That's all."

"Why not just bruise its tail some, then sit down and wait awhile, then bruise it some more, and kill the poor thing by degrees, thereby making the death of the reptile more permanent and effective?"

"Ha, ha, ha, you rascal, I see the point. I guess you have the best of the argument, so far as the snake story goes, but do you know the snake story doesn't work in politics?"

"It doesn't work in politics because the newly elected officer too frequently turns politician and begins laying plans for the next election. Too often, he is made to fear that in doing his whole duty he will offend some John Bently, or Druggist Johnson, who is feeding off the hard earnings of the people by 'special favor,' or by taking the life-blood of the poor and ignorant classes through 'permission' of the government. The way to kill a snake is to kill it by cutting off its head at one blow. The way to kill off vice and crime in a community is for the people and the officials to

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unitedly strike it down with one blow, and if the Johnsons and the Bentlys stand stubbornly in the way, strike them down also. There can be no temporizing with crime. The community which temporizes with indecency and immorality thereby becomes guilty itself, as a whole, and the morals of that community will soon find a low level."

"A public officer must have public sentiment back of him, if he would successfully battle with the various phases of crime to be found in our cities. Do you think the public sentiment of our city is sufficiently strong to warrant you in making a vigorous attack upon the immoral theaters and the sale of poisonous drugs?"

"Well, I will soon find out about that, by doing what I conceive to be my official duty. I don't expect the politicians to back up the effort. Not until they are thoroughly convinced that there are more votes on the moral side than on the immoral side. Then, they will become the most interested, and the least active, supporters of the movement."

"The people seem to forget, all too soon, the noble sacrifices that a brave, honest officer makes in their behalf. That is, the officer's friends forget, but the enemies he has made in doing his duty never forget. They are right on the spot when the next election rolls around, and they are there for business, too. They never forget you. They stay right in battle array, fighting until the last vote is counted."

"No, friend Butler, the people do not forget. They remember the brave and honest public servant and will stand by him so long as he keeps his helmet and shield bright, and ready to do noble battle. True, the people sometimes do not take as much interest in matters of government as they should, otherwise they would kill off the political boosters,

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grafters and bosses. But they do not forget. At any rate, there is only one course for me to pursue, and that is to do my duty as God gives me wisdom to discern it, and that, I will do, regardless of all contingencies."

"Oh, well, old boy, you will never make a good politician. I can see that."

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart for that statement. Now I know you have confidence in me."

"Oh, yes. I always had confidence in you, but you are too headstrong."

"By the way, Joe, how is your 'Prince of Pearls' getting on under his late tutor. Is he an apt student?"

"Indeed he is. But it may be because I am an adept teacher."

"Most likely, Joe. You are an adept at everything, with one exception."

"What is that?"

"Killing snakes. You bruise their poor tails. Ha, ha, ha."

"Oh, you villian. Come on, the cigars are on me."

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CHAPTER XXIV.

A STRONG RESEMBLANCE.

Life at "The Cedars" continued in the same, gentle, even manner as had always characterized the old home, and if there were any heart-pangs, misgivings, broodings or disappointment within, the world without was none the wiser. LeBerte Marchand, it is true, felt that sense of uneasiness natural to one who carries a secret within his bosom which, if once divulged, might bring pain, yet he had carried the secret for so many years that he felt a more rigid injunction upon him to guard it still more zealously, not for his own protection alone, but for the protection of his loved ones, as well. So LeBerte Marchand thought, and so he conscientiously believed. Therefore, as the years crept upon him, leaving their silvery webs upon his brow, the more zealously did the old man guard his secret.

More than once, of late, did he turn to the old iron safe in his private room, a room just off from his bed-room in the old home, and there spend hours in looking over business papers, presumably. He was never disturbed nor molested while so engaged, a mark of respect religiously observed by the other members of the family.

It was in this little iron safe where, years and years before, the little golden locket had been placed at the time it

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was removed from the person of a child, and when little Norkoma was transformed into Walter Marchand, the son of LeBerte Marchand and his young and beautiful wife. There, in the silent vaults of this old safe, it had remained all those years, a secret from the whole world, itself having faded from the memory of the child whose form it once graced, now grown to manhood and middle age.

In the days when Walter and Edith were away from the old home—when the halls and rooms gave an empty sound to the tread of his weary feet or seemed to mock at the tones of his sorrowful voice, LeBerte Marchand found comfort and consolation in the sacredness of this room where, alone, he would fondle the little golden locket, and dream over again and again the scenes of his happiest days. In this little room, he would often go in those days to hold communion with the spirit of her who had been his life, his soul, his everything. It was in this sacred little room where LeBerte Marchand learned to forget the vain and fleeting things of this world, and where his life, his nature began to broaden and gather strength with which to fortify him against the besetting sins of the world. It was in this sacred room where, in holy communion with the hallowed spirits of his loved ones and with God, Marchand found consolation, light, rest, peace of mind and soul.

As the years passed by, and the uncertainty of life slowly dawned upon Marchand, he deemed it prudent and wise to attach to the little locket a written statement of its history, so that in the event of his sudden death, his children should know the truth, and thereupon act as their better judgment might dictate. So it was, that in the days before Walter and Edith had returned from their colleges, LeBerte Marchand

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wrote a full and complete history of the locket, together with a statement of Walter's life, so far as he then knew. Then attaching the same to the golden locket, he placed both in the iron safe, and, in so doing, LeBerte Marchand felt that he had followed the wiser and better course, and thereafter experienced a freedom of mind, always borne of righteous deeds.

It was not, however, until recent years that Marchand felt any uneasiness of mind with relation to the incidents and history connected with the locket. How often, perhaps, he was tempted to destroy the innocent, little, golden memoir and its accompanying history, may well be left to conjecture. As frequently, however, as Marchand went to the iron safe with the intention of destroying the little locket and its history did he stop and ponder ere he committed the deed. The little thing seemed to possess a charm for him, and as he would hold it in his hands, about to cast it to destruction, his mind would revert to the days of yore, and the determination would falter and pass away. Then he would settle down in his big chair beside the safe and live over again, in memory, the days when little Norkoma came to his happy home. He would see, in fancy, the sweet young wife, as she appeared when she attempted to take the innocent little locket away from her baby boy. He would follow the pictured dream on through the dark days of grief and sorrow, until he would be aroused from his reverie by tired brain or aching limbs, then placing the dear object back in the safe, he would say to himself, "Not yet, not yet."

Having thus, temporarily, freed his mind from the conflicting emotions, he would go forth again to enjoy the loving companionship and cheerful sunshine of his peaceful

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family. Upon one of those occasions, however, his strength became overtaxed, and as he arose to leave the room, consciousness fled, the old gentleman falling to the floor, limp and apparently lifeless. The keen ear of the good wife caught the sound of the fall, and she was at her husband's side in a moment. In a short while the old gentleman was restored to his normal condition, but he mentally resolved that thereafter he would exercise more prudence. This was at a time when the family was enjoying a visit from two of Edith's old schoolmates who resided in Texas.

Katherine Rathbone and sister Dorothy lived in New York and attended the college which Edith attended. The two sisters and Edith became warm friends, which friendship also included the little music teacher, now the matronly Mrs. Marchand. Later, Katherine, the elder sister, married a Mr. Frederick Templeton, and they, with Dorothy, moved to Houston, the railroad center and metropolis of Texas. Edith and her friends, Katherine and Dorothy, had kept in close touch with each other, and now, for the first time since their school days, were realizing the extreme pleasure of a visit which had, from year to year, been postponed on account of one thing and another.

A merry household was "The Cedars" indeed, during the visit of Mrs. Templeton and Dorothy Rathbone, both of whom were bright, intelligent, beautiful of face and figure. Dorothy was not only beautiful and intelligent, but in music was exceptionally accomplished. Though it be considered rude to speculate upon a woman's age, as a rule, the truth is that Dorothy was beyond the age of legal majority and she was not the least averse to letting that fact be known, an unusual thing for a young woman.

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In nature and general character, Edith and Dorothy were almost identical. What the one loved the other also loved. What were the dislikes of the one were, also, the dislikes of the other. Plain, unaffected, honest simplicity was a striking characteristic of both. Whatever interested their close friends was, also, of interest to Edith and Dorothy. Edith, already interested in municipal affairs, had not long to wait until Dorothy was well under the influence of the contagion. The general subject of politics was not altogether a new field for Dorothy, for she had learned something of the art over in Texas, where, she said, they sometimes had politics served to them "right off the griddle."

Dorothy's bright, crisp, original style of dealing with a subject under argument was exceedingly refreshing and interesting to both Walter Marchand and Joe Butler. They were both charmed with her, and Dorothy was equally interested in the two men. One subject in particular which proved of mutual interest to Dorothy and Walter was, that of the proposed Pan-American College of Commerce, an institution calculated to secure the trade and commerce of Latin-America for the merchant and manufacturer of the United States.

"How came you to give your attention to such a huge and ponderous enterprise, Dorothy?" asked LeBerte Marchand, who, having fully recovered from the fatigue of his lonely communion in the little room as above stated, was enjoying the society of his family and guests.

"I hardly know how I first became interested in the subject, but once interested, I pursued it because I felt that it was the key to the solution of the problem: 'What shall be the commercial future of the United States?'"

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"It seems a rather difficult study for a girl," said Butler.

"Not at all. One needs but ask the question: 'Why are the great trunk lines of railroad of the middle states making such haste to reach the gulf ports'; and what is the answer?"

"Well, they want to be ready to reach the Orient through the Panama canal when it is completed. Is that not the reason?" asked Walter.

"Partly so, but not the sole reason. For the sake of argument, however, admit it to be the sole reason. Why seek the trade of the Orient and overlook a far better field of trade right at our gulf ports—Latin-America?"

"I have given no consideration to the question," said Butler, "although I have sometimes wondered why it was that the trade of Latin-America was not more eagerly sought after by the exporter of the United States."

"It has been eagerly sought after," replied Dorothy, "but how? By sending out catalogues printed in the English language, and by sending agents into those countries who could speak neither Latin, Spanish nor Portuguese. Even our government sends commercial agents, ministers and diplomats to those countries who speak no other than the English language."

"That, of itself, would be sufficient to check any progress in the way of acquiring a commercial foothold in Latin-America," suggested Walter, "and there can easily be found a remedy for that evil."

"What would you suggest as a remedy?" queried the elder Marchand, who was now warming up to the subject under discussion.

"The very thing that has been promulgated for years over

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in Texas, to-wit, the establishing of a Pan-American College of Commerce. In such an institution, the future commercial agents for the Latin-American countries could be trained and educated so that when they assumed the duties of their respective stations, they could fluently speak and write the language of the country in which they were stationed; would know the wants, needs, habits and customs of the people, also the topography and geography of the country, just as they know that of the United States. Then, they would be of some service to their mother country, whereas, at the present, and always in the past, instead of being a benefit, they were more of a drawback and a hindrance."

"Now, you have spoken a whole lot of truth, Mr. Walter," said Dorothy. "The situation you have given is true to life. I have traveled some in several of the Latin-American states, and have there met American traveling men, or agents, and, truly, I never met but one who could speak any but the English language. I have met many of our government commercial agents and ministers, but never did I find one that spoke Spanish."

"It would seem that our government should take more interest in this matter," said the elder Marchand.

"Government never does anything until there is sufficient pressure brought to bear upon it by the people, to stimulate to action," said Butler. "The American merchant and manufacturer are, primarily, the ones to press upon our government the importance of action."

"No, not necessarily so," said Dorothy, "for every citizen of our country is, or ought to be, primarily interested in the growth, importance and grandeur of our country. This

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is a commercial age, and one of the chief functions of the government appears to be, 'commercial expansion and aggrandizement,' and to reach the acme, our people and our government are running off to fields of commerce thousands of miles away, while Europe smiles and retains peaceable possession of the world's greatest and best commercial pastures right under our noses, which is Latin-America."

"What is the greatest factor in the process by which Europe retains the Latin-American trade?" asked Butler.

"From the most reliable sources, I am informed that Latin-America educates between twenty and twenty-five thousand of her sons and daughters in the schools and colleges of Europe, annually. That is the greatest factor."

"How so?" queried Butler.

"Because, those who are educated in foreign countries are the children of the prosperous and wealthy class, that means the class who do the commercial business of Latin-America. Every student from those countries carries letters of introduction and credit to the commercial houses and banks in Europe with which their fathers, uncles or friends are doing business, and with which their grandfathers and great grandfathers did business, thus keeping up the line of social and business acquaintance of a hundred years, perhaps."

"I think I shall have to come over into Texas and learn more about this great project," suggested Walter.

"We would be glad to have you come, Mr. Walter," returned Dorothy. "We have plenty of room in Texas for several big men like you, and they will be warmly welcomed by our people, too."

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"Now, Dorothy, don't try to flatter me, you know it might make me vain."

"Oh, the idea of Walter Marchand ever becoming vain," interjected Butler. "I have been trying for two years to make him understand that he is a big man, regardless of stature, but he spurns my attempts."

"Oh, well, so much the greater, he," interposed Edith.

"Bless you, Edith, you have been so absorbed with some serious thought all evening, you surprise me by budding out so suddenly with such high compliments," rejoined Walter.

"Ah, we have heard a great deal of you, Mr. Mayor, away over in Texas. Your fame has gone out over the land more largely than you think for," remarked Dorothy.

"We will run him for governor next time," said Butler, laughingly.

"Now, Butler, don't get to 'killing snakes' again. You know you only bruise their tails."

"By the way, Walter, did you speak to the ladies about the opera? The box is at our service for tonight."

"No, I must confess the matter completely slipped my memory. What a forgetful fellow I'm getting to be. But we have time to get ready. What say you girls, mother and father? Shall we all go?"

"Oh, to be sure," said Edith. "We will get ready at once. Mother will be ready long before the rest of us, I am sure."

"Well, mother doesn't make so many primps as you girls. Do you mother?" said Walter as he went over by the mother and gently encircled his arm around her and reverently kissed her cheek.

"No, my son, a mother must expect to grow old and ugly, you know, for old father time is an artist whose tracings upon

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the cheeks can not be painted out by human hands," replied the mother.

"But time has not been unkind to my dear mother, for there are no tracings in those fair cheeks. Yes, there is one, and I am going to kiss it away. There, mother, it is gone, but I'm sorry, for I think you were prettier with it."

"Oh, Walter, my son, you are so good and gentle in all your conduct that I am sure I could not scold you."

"Why scold me? I love my mother too well to do anything that would call for her disapproval. There now, mother, get ready for the opera, and we will go and all be happy and young again."

"Walter, old boy," said Butler when Mrs. Marchand had left the room, "I'd give anything in the world if my mother were living, to have the opportunity of doing what I have just witnessed. You must certainly be happy, if for no other reason on earth than the fact that you can and do cause that dear old mother of yours so much joy by your kind, loving conduct toward her."

"Well, no son ever loved a mother more than I love that good, sweet mother of mine, and, of course, I take pleasure in trying to make her happy."

"I could have been better to my mother. I was rather young when she died, and I presume I was like most young men, too smart, too self-willed, and too inconsiderate of the blessings of a good mother."

"Say, Joe, you can make up for some of your youthful indiscretions by being good to old Aunt Dinah."

"I will certainly be good to the old dorky. That is the only thing that I have upon which to practice real charity."

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"Oh, I don't know. You like to tease the snakes. Ha, ha, ha."

"Say, old boy, I'll give you a birthday present if you'll let up on that snake story. When is your birthday?"

"I've forgotten, but here comes mother, she will know. Say, my mother, dear, when is my birthday? I am about to receive a present."

"Really, Walter, the record, as shown in the old family Bible, appears to be uncertain about the date of your birth. You know I am not your real mother."

"Of course, but no real mother could be sweeter, gentler or more beautiful in heart and soul. Sometimes I feel like you are my real mother."

"Yes, my son, and I often wish I were your real mother."

"No real son and mother ever resembled each other more, I am certain," said Butler. "I never saw a stronger resemblance."

"I never thought of that," said Walter. "Hello, here come the girls, and here is father. Now let us be off: the carriages await us."

"Lead on, McDuff, lead on," cried Dorothy with a bright twinkle in her eye, "and last be he who shall first cry, hold."

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CHAPTER XXV.

A CURTAIN LECTURE.

Butler's remark, to the effect that there was a striking resemblance between Mrs. Marchand and her son Walter, left a deep and lasting impression upon the mind of the mistress of "The Cedars." Why such should be the case, she did not know. The remark that, "I never saw a stronger resemblance," rang in the little woman's ears and preyed upon her mind during the entire evening, the entertainment being secondary only, for her. She could not drive the thought from her mind, though she kept her own counsel, and said nothing. When her head rested upon the pillow and her eyes closed for sleep that night, neither rest nor sleep came to the poor, troubled woman. She argued with herself, thus:

"Why does this foolish thought cling to my mind with such tenacity? There can be no possibility of such a dream ever proving true. O God, that it were a reality, or that in some mysterious manner it might yet prove to be true. Why did Mr. Butler make such a remark? He is an honest man, and must have observed a resemblance between us, otherwise he would not have suggested it. I can not judge, for I do not know how I look. No person knows how he looks, as compared with some other person. But I know what

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I shall do tomorrow. I shall compare our pictures. I will use for that purpose a photograph I had taken when I was a young girl, and of Walter I will use one he had taken about the time he went to college. But, pshaw! What good will that do? He is LeBerte Marchand's son, so, of course, there can be no possibility of—Why has LeBerte Marchand avoided a conversation with me as to the strange relationship between Edith and Walter, and—and the family record in the Bible? Oh, I must be going wild. Why do I not becalm myself. Pshaw! Norma Marchand, you are a silly little fool, that is what you are. There, now. But what mother's heart would not be foolish if her mind be filled with such ambitions, such perplexing hopes and fears? Well, I will be quiet. I will force myself to forget, and go to sleep. I will count—one, two, three, four, five, six—no, I will imagine I see sheep jumping a fence, and I will count them. There! There is a bunch of sheep, and there is a fence. Pshaw! The fence is not high enough. There to the left is a higher one, and the sheep are going that way. Hold on, there, not so fast. Now, there one jumped, two, three, fo-ur, f-i-v-e, s-i-x". The poor, tired, little woman fell asleep. It was a troubled sleep, however—a sleep that brought rest to neither mind nor body—a sleep filled with fancies and dreams.

Morning dawned, and the sun rose bright and clear over the eastern horizon. It was in the early springtime, and the feathered songsters sang gleefully to their mates in the boughs and branches of the tall trees that graced the grounds surrounding the old home. Mrs. Marchand heard the silvery notes of bird melody as they, with gleams of sunshine, floated in through her half open window.

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"How happy those little birds must be," said she, with a sigh. "Without a care for the morrow, are they. And their homes are in the trees, meadows, fields and woods, while we human mortals toil and labor and aspire until we acquire wealth, fame and power, thinking those will bring us happiness and pleasure. When we have attained all that our younger hearts believed was necessary to our complete happiness, we then begin to realize that our lives are almost spent, and that the power to enjoy has passed away. Oh, that eternal, restless spirit which inhabits the human breast, can it ever be satiated? It is like the waters of a troubled sea. With all that I have around me, a kind and loving husband, affectionate children, a good home, every need supplied, every whim gratified, and, withal, my restless spirit will not be quiet. It calls for my long lost baby, my child, the child of my own blood. Yet, if he were to be found, who knows what pain and sorrow the finding might bring. The picture! The pictures! I will compare the photographs!"

The little mother sprang excitedly from her couch, and taking from a drawer an old album, turned to a picture, a tintype, taken of her when she was about nineteen years of age. In another album she found a photograph of Walter, taken when he was a boy of about the same age. Then, sitting down upon the side of the bed, laid the two albums out before her and carefully compared the photographs.

"I know I am foolish. Strangers might discern a resemblance, but I can not. Just because Mr. Butler made a chance remark that there was a striking resemblance, I have tortured myself all night long. I must put a stop to this foolishness, for there can be no such possibility that I am

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the mother of Walter Marchand. Even if I were, we could not love each other differently nor more strongly than we do now. What could be gained if such were the conditions? Our relations would remain as now. Oh, it has been very foolish in me to act in this manner—to torture myself over an impossible condition. I hope I may have the strength and bravery never to allow my foolish heart to dream of such impossible things again. I will drive the thoughts from my mind, and then I will be as happy as those innocent little birds out there in the trees. If people were not tempted with foolish and sometimes unholy ambitions and desires, they would be happy. The only ambition that it is safe to harbor in the human heart is the ambition to live an upright, honorable and honest life.”

Having calmed herself, the little woman quickly donned her robes and passed out into the beautiful grounds to enjoy the fresh, balmy morning. She was somewhat surprised at being hailed by Walter, who had risen early and gone into the grounds to read or ponder over some perplexing problem, as was his custom.

“Hello, little mother,” said he. “Come over here and sit with me upon this old rustic.”

“Good morning, Mr. Early Bird. After the worms, I suppose,” answered the mother.

“Yes, appeasing the worm of unrest, the ambition for knowledge. I have been reading a report made to the Texas legislature by a committee, relating to the proposed Pan-American College of Commerce. Do you know, it is a very interesting subject.”

“I suppose so, my son, especially to those who care to wrestle with the great problems which, when solved, help

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to shape the destinies of nations. I appreciate the great benefit which such an institution would be to the whole country, and especially to the Gulf States. I hope the project may be consummated."

"Sometimes I feel that, when my term of office expires, I shall then devote my whole life, if need be, to the promulgation of this great project, and especially to aid in procuring its establishment somewhere upon the gulf coast. It seems so plain to me, that with proper exertions upon the part of the people in this behalf, the governments interested would not hesitate in taking up and completing the matter. It would mean that the trade of Latin-America would be transferred from Europe to the United States, and that would mean great things for the ports of the Gulf States."

"I fear you are overtaxing your strength. Do not be too ambitious, but learn to take the labors of your life more easily. Pardon me, my son, do you never feel that you should have a home of your own, with wife and loved ones around you?"

"Why, mother, you are not tired of me at "The Cedars, are you?"

"No, no, no, my son. The natural state of a good man is at the head of a family of his own. You are losing so much of life, working, toiling and struggling as you are for the people, alone, forgetting yourself. By so doing you are losing the sweeter portion of life, which, by and by, you will seriously regret. It seems that both you and Edith are strangely unconcerned about the present and the future. I speak of this matter, my son, only as a fond and loving mother."

"Yes, mother, I know that, and I appreciate your kind

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words. But there is something peculiar about our lives that neither Edith nor myself understand. We are brother and sister of one blood, yet we have that strange fascination for each other that is born of the wildest extremes. We love each other, and have so loved from the time we were little children. We were lovers in our nurseries, in our school days, in our college days, and are still sweethearts, rather than brother and sister."

"It is, indeed, strange. I often read the letters which you wrote to Edith while she was in college, and sometimes read the letters which she wrote to you. I remember how you poured out your young and tender heart, and likewise did Edith, in return. I never knew of a similar case, and I doubt whether any there be. At any rate, it would appear that each of you might find some other companionable heart to love and cherish, since you are brother and sister."

"I do not know, I never expected to bear such a love for another girl as I have borne for Edith, yet it might be possible that I should. I realize the wisdom of your suggestions, and if Edith would only find some one whom she could love and marry, perhaps I should take courage and follow suit."

"I think Edith likes Mr. Butler—"

"What?—I beg your pardon, mother, I meant to say, do you really think she loves Butler?"

"I did not say, love. I really think she likes Mr. Butler. I fear, however, that Mr. Butler is too much enamored with Dorothy. Don't you think so, my son?"

"Well, now, I had begun to like Dorothy a little, myself. But not enough to cause me the loss of sleep. So Butler likes Dorothy, eh?"

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"Yes, I think he does, and I am not sure but that his feelings are somewhat reciprocated. I think Dorothy really likes Butler, too."

"Well, Joe Butler is a good, noble fellow, but Dorothy must not stand in the way of my little sister, if Edith has any heart for him. I had hoped, formerly, that Edith and myself might live on forever as in the present and past, but I now see that it is wrong, and that we are blind to our own better interests. If Edith should ever marry, I would rather she would marry Butler than any other person I know, for he is noble, good and true. Besides, he is one of the best friends I have ever had."

"Dorothy is a splendid little woman. I knew her well while she was in college, and I knew her to be all that man can expect of woman. No two souls were ever more nearly similar in all respects than are Edith and Dorothy. Whoever could love the one, could not help loving the other. also."

"Yes, mother dear, I believe you. Really, I think I could love Dorothy equally as well as Edith, were it not for the life-long companionship of sister and myself. From babyhood days we have been constant companions, and, in a sense, sweethearts."

"Certainly, but childhood days are gone, my son, and with them the dreams, the glimpses of fairy land. You are now looking back over a decade as you once looked back over a six-months. Months and years are now passing by more swiftly than did your youthful days. In your youth, you looked forward along your future pathway, which was lighted with the lamps of ambition and hope, and the days and weeks dragged heavily along, all but too slowly. It is different

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now. By and by the days of your strong and reliant manhood will begin to wane, and you will then realize that your bark is upon an eddying stream which is rushing rapidly toward the grave. The outlines of your earthly sphere that once lay in broad expanse before your hopeful vision will then begin to draw closer and closer until you will be surrounded by great mountain peaks and ranges, through which there is no passage, and within which you will be entombed with ever narrowing limits, from which no human being can aid you to escape. Then you will look backward and ponder over what your life might have been. In fancy, will you see what might have been your fair-haired boy and your brown-eyed girl playing fondly around a happy father's knee. You may see your good and loving wife standing at the gate to welcome the husband home, and you will hear the music of a happy fireside, by far sweeter than ten thousand stringed harps. Then, to awake from your fancy's dream, a soul's sickness will possess you and hold you bound, for you will then realize that it is too late. The sweets of the life you should have enjoyed are passed from you forever. Then will come seclusion, loss of friends, decay, until you walk in silence and alone, brooding, grieving, sorrowing, with no one to love, and none to love and cherish you. At last, you pass away from the busy throngs, and the world moves on as before. Then you—"

"Hold, mother dear, your picture is too sad, I do not wish to hear more, I do not care to follow."

"But it is a true picture, my son, and I trust you may never experience the sadness of its truth."

"I know how true it must be, for as you drew the picture, there came before my mind's eye several characters whom

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I know, and who have realized its sad truth. I know that sister and I have been wasting our lives, but the mystery, the mystery of it all."

"Well, my son, waiting and postponing will not better conditions."

"No, I presume not. But I have so much before me to be done. It is duty, duty, duty. Duty is always staring me in the face, whether I sleep or wake. I should never find the time to devote to the question of marriage."

"If you find the girl and fall in love with her, there will appear a way. Do you remember the song, 'Love Will Find the Way'?"

The mother and son were taken by surprise when Edith and Dorothy suddenly rushed upon them with:

"Well, well, our dear little children, we have been searching everywhere for you. We feared some wild animals had actually eaten you."

"Yes, and we were also fearful lest some big bandit had carried you off and would hold you for a ransom," added Dorothy.

"Who would have ever paid the ransom to have recovered us poor little children," laughingly suggested Walter.

"Oh, we would have gone to Mr. Butler and had him advertise for you, the first thing. Then, we intended to take up a public subscription, you know, for we did not intend that an opportunity for excitement should escape us," said Dorothy.

"I will warrant that if there were to be an opportunity for excitement, the pair of twins would not overlook it," suggested Walter.

"We were intending to bring your breakfast out to you,

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in case you were held for ransom and were hungry," suggested Edith. "But seeing you were only detained by the ties of nature and a beautiful morning, we cordially invite you to join us at breakfast, for Katherine and father must be starving, since we have been waiting so very long."

"Gracious sakes! I had forgotten all about breakfast. Mother's curtain lecture has been so absorbingly interesting, I quite forgot all else. And I had promised to be at the office bright and early, too."

"There goes! That old office makes a regular slave out of my big brother," cried Edith.

"What is that old saying, something like this? 'We are slaves to a horde of petty tyrants.' That statement applies, I presume, to such public officials as Mayors, does it not, Mr. Walter?" asked Dorothy.

"Indeed it does, and it applies with equal force to lawyers."

"Oh, the lawyers, the lawyers, they——"

"Dear me, children, do not be so tardy, lest we starve Katherine and father, while we stand here and argue social, political, economical and nonsensical questions," said Edith. Then taking the mother by the hand, preceded Dorothy and Walter, who were left to follow at will.

The "curtain lecture," as Walter had termed the conversation with his mother, left an impression upon his mind that was not only lasting, but effective. As Walter mentally reviewed the picture again, there came to him a half notion that he would begin laying plans for his future home life. He liked Dorothy, and for aught he knew, his feeling might take a more serious turn if given an opportunity. Again, Dorothy was a student of political economics, such as had

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absorbed his very soul. That was one important point in common between them. Dorothy also lived in Texas, which State, at first glance, would appear to be the logical location of a great International Exposition of Commerce for the nations of the whole Western Hemisphere, because of its being the very center of the Western world, therefore more favorable for transportation by both land and sea. Walter had resolved that, upon the expiration of his term of office, he would visit Texas at all hazards, and there study the conditions as to the proposed Pan-American College of Commerce. And who, more than Dorothy, could afford him better or more pleasant opportunities for that purpose? Dorothy had acquainted herself with the entire situation in Texas. She had traveled in Mexico, Peru, Chile, and other Spanish-American States, and knew something of the conditions there; besides, she spoke the Spanish language as fluently as she did the English. What an inspiring companion, should it so happen that their lives should be thrown together in this great work of promulgating such an institution, by and through which the merchant and manufacturer of the United States should capture the trade of all Latin-America. What teeming millions of commerce would then flow through the ports of Galveston, Houston, New Orleans and other Gulf ports. More rapidly than pen can describe did these thoughts flash across Walter's mind, as did many other inspiring conceptions of the future greatness of the great Southwest, until he was wholly oblivious to all around him, and until he was awakened from his reverie by a tugging at his sleeve, and a sweet, silvery voice saying:

"A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Walter. I would offer more, but I am flat broke. Won't you make me a loan?"

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"Certainly, certainly. How much money do you want?" said Walter, half abstractedly. Then turning to his companion, he realized the true situation, and said: "I beg your pardon, Dorothy. I was, for the moment, abstracted. I hope there is no offense?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, Mr. Walter! That curtain lecture seems to have set rather hard upon you. Was it a lecture upon 'official duty'?"

"No, Dorothy. Part of it consisted in praise of your dear, good self. I must confess that, since you caught me red handed, my present abstracted condition of mind included you within the dream, for dream it was. I had been thinking of Texas. I had almost concluded to make a visit to that great State for the purpose of seeing the country, and incidentally studying the situation as to the projected Pan-American College of Commerce. In that event, will you play the role of teacher?"

"I shall be pleased to afford you every facility at my poor command," answered Dorothy, in a more serious mood.

"And will you become a co-student of the question, also?"

"I could not lose interest in the subject now, for it means a great deal to Texas and the Gulf States. Besides, the consummation of the project is almost assured, either as a government or a private proposition. Yes, I will be pleased to join you in the furtherance of the project."

"Then, under those conditions, I shall come to Texas, and I am sure we shall become great friends, and perhaps——"

"Children, children, why in the world do you not come to your breakfast?" shouted Edith from the dining room window, nearby.

"We are coming, sister," returned Walter.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MAYOR'S TROUBLES.

Municipal affairs were now moving along smoothly, with Walter Marchand as the chief executive head of the city government. It had been prophesied by some that the new administration would ruin the city by a system of radical changes and reforms, but now, that almost a year had passed and there had been no harm done, the more frightened ones began to feel a greater sense of security under the Marchand regime. True, he had put a quietus on high handed crime, such as the indiscriminate sale of cocaine, morphine, and other poisonous drugs. He had effectually put the disgraceful variety theaters and dance halls out of business, and the public advertising of those places upon the streets of the city had become a thing of the past. He had rid the city of the many footpads, confidence men and bunco steerers, so that the security of the citizens was assured upon the streets, while the general air of the city caused a feeling of pride in the government.

The Marchand administration had directed its efforts to the correction of the many abuses and shortcomings of the various public service corporations, but it had not overstepped the bounds of reason and good judgment in the matter. It had not sought to make a show, or play to the galleries, for

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political purposes. It went about the matter just as a business man would go about adjusting his business affairs with a private corporation, or other business concern, yet those concerns were made to understand that the city officials meant business. There was no spleen to vent, no "bile" to throw off, no venom to spew out, and no political debts to pay. Consequently, official authority was not used to embarrass local service corporations, nor was it permitted to be used as a tool for the political purposes or gains of any individual or set of men.

Marchand and his associates used good judgment in the exercise of their official functions, and when a public utility corporation was guilty of any wrong, or derelict to any duty, it was called into consultation with the Mayor and his associates. This was done quietly, without any blowing of trumpets, and an understanding was had. It was always arranged in such a manner that the abuse at once ceased, and the wrong was remedied, but if the representative of the corporation became stubborn and unwilling to submit to what appeared to be just and right, he was given to understand that the Mayor and city officials were vested with sufficient power and authority to enforce their just demands.

The administration was aware of the fact that there had been permitted to grow up many abuses through the slack methods of former administrations. That on account of non-interference of long standing, the abuses became so well entrenched and firmly established that the plea of "vested rights" was entitled to some show of respectability. Again, the fact that, sometimes, the public was apt to be too ready to criticise and complain upon grounds barely justifiable, was not lost sight of by Marchand and his associates. Each

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side of a case was well considered, and equal fairness and justice to both sides was the object to be obtained.

The local superintendants of the various public service corporations began to learn that, if they would do justice to the people, there would be no vexation, no harassing, no rebuking, and no humiliation. They also began to understand that, unless a spirit of fairness and justice to the people was promptly exemplified and maintained, they would, unquestionably, be forced to do right.

It was during the period when these managers and superintendents of public service corporations were being frequently interviewed by the Mayor and city officials, that Mr. White, the manager of the waterworks, felt aggrieved because the citizens of White Oak Addition had been persistently appealing for a water connection with the main part of the city. White Oak Addition was a neat, prosperous suburb, though a part of the city proper, because it was within the legal city limits. The citizens of this suburb paid their city taxes regularly, thus helping to support the city government, and they felt that they were entitled to some consideration at the hands of the city, at least to the benefit of fire protection.

"Our company can not afford to lay a water main out to White Oak Addition," said Mr. White to the Mayor, "because there are too few residences along the street between that place and where our mains now extend. We could not hope to make a profit on that extension inside of a year or two, should we make the improvement."

"Your company is making good profits now, is it not?" asked the Mayor.

"Yes, it is doing well enough, but it wants to be let alone

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for the time being. If we are forced to put in extensions to all the additions to the city, we can not hope to pay a dividend. We certainly have a right to expect a fair return upon our investment."

"The extension to White Oak Addition would add to the value of your plant, would it not? Men go into business enterprises frequently not expecting the business to pay a profit for a year or more. In this case, the investment would prove a good paying one within a year, would it not?"

"Oh, yes, there is no question about that. It would pay eventually."

"Do you ever consider the fact that those citizens are helping to sustain the city government by the payment of their city taxes, and that the city government pays your company about forty thousand dollars per year for the public hydrants, and charges you nothing for the use of the streets and alleys? Should not those White Oak citizens have some consideration at the hands of the city and your company? Is it not due to them that they be afforded some relief at our hands?"

"Well, I can not see what my company has to do with that; we are not in the insurance business."

"True, Mr. White, but you are using the public streets of the city for the transaction of your business. For this, the city derives no compensation, and at the same time pays you a high rate for the water that is used for public purposes, while the citizens pay you a still higher rate for the water used for private purposes. The rights you thus enjoy are valuable rights, and they belong to the whole people, the citizens of White Oak Addition included. When the citizens granted you the privilege to use the streets and alleys for the conduct of your business, they expected you to treat

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them with fairness and just consideration of their needs. Now let me ask you, can you not make this much needed extension, and still make a good profit upon the business for the whole city?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so. But we do not figure on the matter that way. We figure on each extension making a profit when the extension is completed. We can not afford to build up the various additions to the city by making extensions at our own expense, thereby affording modern facilities to speculators in real estate."

"Now, right there is where you local managers and superintendents of public service corporations make a great mistake. You fail to recognize the fact that you are virtually in partnership with the city, and that the growth of the city insures the growth and prosperity of your plants and business. You overlook the fact that it is by the permission of the people that you are operating your plant in the heart of the city, where the service affords you enormous profits. When the people ask you to extend your water mains further out to the less thickly populated portions of the city for their benefit, and where the service will not pay so great a profit, you protest. You forget that it is out of the rights and privileges which you enjoy that you make your profits. Those rights and privileges are your most valuable assets, yet in truth and in fact they belong to the people. You fellows will not see that fact, but persistently look at the matter from the standpoint of your own, personal, selfish interests, until the people are brought to the knowledge that you are abusing the rights and privileges they have graciously permitted you to enjoy, thereby causing a feeling of prejudice against you. It is but a natural result, and that preju-

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dice is manifested in divers ways. You sometimes are made aware of it by way of large verdicts against you for damages in the damage suits brought against your companies. It is probable that some of the large verdicts are just, and it may be that some parts of the verdicts are the results of the general prejudice that exists among the people against some of the public service corporations. If that be true, may it not be the result of your persistent refusal to do justice to the people with whom you have entered into partnership by accepting and enjoying the valuable rights and franchises? My impression is, that if you fellows will always respect the rights of the people, the people will treat you justly. But so long as you fail to give the people a square deal, you should not cry if the people, through their officers, sometimes retaliate."

"The people expect too much of us. We should be permitted to make a fair return upon our invested capital."

"Certainly, I grant you that right, and the people expect you to make fair returns. They will always be glad to have you make fair returns. I assure you the people will often make sacrifices for that purpose, if in turn you will exemplify a willingness to do justice toward them. But you must not, in exchange for the valuable privileges you enjoy at the hands of the people, expect to be the only gainer in the transaction."

"Our company is willing to make extensions and improvements as rapidly as the situation will warrant, but we do not intend to bankrupt the concern."

"How would you like to submit your books to the scrutiny of a committee of citizens, or officers, so that the condition of your business may be known?"

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"We take the ground that our business is our own affair, and the public has nothing to do with it. We should be opposed to such a proceeding."

"Again, you overlook the fact that, inasmuch as the proportion of your capital stock which is represented by the right and privilege of using the streets and alleys of the city, belongs to the public, you and the public are, therefore, partners. One partner has as much right to know the condition of the business of the concern as the other partner. That is the right of partners, by all that is fair and just between partners; and, further, it is the right of a partner so as to know whether he is getting a square deal. I want to tell you this, that if the public service corporations shall ignore the rights of the people in these matters, the people will resort to the enactment of such laws as will make the entire business of every such concern as open as a public record, so that all people may read as they run. Now, the people, as a rule, simply demand what is fair and just to them, but if there is not exhibited a more liberal spirit of fairness by you fellows, the people will not fail to resort to such methods as will assure them security in their own rights."

"Oh course, Mr. Marchand, you understand that I am not the company. I am simply the local superintendent and manager, with authority to do only the things which I am directed to do by the company. I realize the truth of your remarks, but I am powerless to act, except under instructions. However, I will take the matter up with my superiors and see what can be done about the White Oak extension."

"Have you not done that yet? Six months ago you told me you would see what could be done along that line, and after all this waiting you now inform me that you will take

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the matter up with your superiors. You knew you had that to do at the very outset, but you have delayed until now. That is not fair to the city administration, which has treated you with all due courtesy. I shall not submit to that treatment any longer. I now notify you that within ninety days that extension must be completed and ready for operation, otherwise you will have to deal with us in a way that your company will not fully appreciate. This ends our conference, Mr. White."

"I shall do the best I can with my company, Mr. Marchand."

A short time after White left the Mayor's office, a delegation of citizens appeared, complaining of the poor service of the telephone company. The delegation was composed of business men. Mr. Wharton, being the spokesman, began:

"Mayor Marchand, we have called upon you, as the Mayor of our city, to ascertain if there is not some way of getting better service out of the telephone company. We are paying high rent for our 'phones, and the fact is, we get no service worth speaking of."

"Have you complained to Mr. Black, the local manager?"

"Yes, we have telephoned to him several times, but he always says that he will do all that is within his power to afford us the best possible service. He has been making those same promises for more than a year, yet the service grows no better. One of the greatest troubles seems to be the careless and neglectful operators at the exchange. They are 'sassy' and inattentive to business."

"Well, my friends, I have not observed any great amount of impoliteness nor inattention among the exchange oper-

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ators. Nor have I had the least bit of trouble from them. Suppose I try the 'phone right now, for example."

Marchand picked up the ear trumpet, and without any waiting there came the question, "Number?" to which Marchand replied: "37, please."

"That is a rare exception," said one of the delegation. "I am certain that would never occur in my store."

"Nor in mine, nor mine, nor mine," almost chorused the members of the delegation.

"Well, gentlemen, you are not the first delegation to complain to me in regard to the poor service of the telephone company. I have had conference after conference with the manager, and he assures me he is doing all within his power to bring about a better service. I find the service is far better than formerly."

"Yes, they are good on promises, but they do nothing but make promises. They should be forced to come to time, right from the word go, and you are just the man to make them toe the mark."

"In the telephone service there is this peculiarity," said Marchand. "The exchange is not an automatic machine. We have to depend upon the services of human operators. Those operators are, generally, women and girls. Those young women are mighty quick to detect a cross and crabbed voice, the same as you would be if a person came into your store and acted cross and ugly. The better way to get good service through the exchange is to speak gently and good naturedly. It will not be long until the exchange girls will find it a pleasure to serve you, and they will serve you promptly. Otherwise you may expect poor service."

"The management should not retain employes who resort

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to the practice of delaying patrons, just because one voice is more pleasant than another. We business men have no time to fool with silly exchange girls."

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but let me assure you that a telephone girl is entitled to as much respect and ladylike treatment over the 'phone as you gentlemen demand for your lady clerks at your counters. Human nature is the same the world over, and so long as the telephone is operated by human beings, so long will the gruff, irritable and unpleasant voice be superseded by the pleasant, genial and respectful mannered applicant, whether the exchange operator be male or female. Do not misunderstand me, however, for I am not defending the telephone company. It has many faults which must be remedied, and I shall bend my every energy to bring about a better condition, but I must have the co-operation of the good citizens, lest I fail. I ask you gentlemen to join me at this time in a conference with Mr. Black, the manager."

"Oh, we have not the time to see him. We thought it would be sufficient to see you about the matter."

"There is where you are in error. My continual conferring with the managers of those concerns leads them to believe that I am simply meddling into their affairs, whereas, if the citizens would follow up my work by their own efforts, it would be plain that I am seeking simple justice only in these matters. Why not join me now, and lay the matter plainly before Mr. Black, in person?"

"Well, you see, we are men of business, and we can not afford to offend either Mr. Black or his employees, as it would probably injure our business, you know."

"You are willing, however, to unload the burden upon me.

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I am in business here, too. I shall call Mr. Black over the 'phone, and have him here in a few minutes, if you will wait."

"No, do not call him, as we are in somewhat of a hurry and can not wait. In talking the matter over with him, you need not mention our names."

"I see no reason for not telling the truth about it. You pay your 'phone rent, don't you?"

"Certainly, certainly, but the same results may be obtained without mentioning names. We are certainly glad you will help us out in this matter. Good day, Mr. Marchand."

"Good day, gentlemen. Glad you called."

When the delegation of business men had gone, Walter Marchand sank back into his big office chair with a feeling of disgust. He had been accustomed to all sorts of appeals and kicks against the various public service concerns, but he had never dealt with a set of fellows who were so willing to make trouble, and so unwilling to father their offspring.

"That kind of business is what makes it doubly hard upon a public official," mused Marchand. "People will frequently try to throw their burdens upon the officer, whereas, if they would practice a little common sense, and exhibit the courage of an honest cause, they would have no reason for complaint, at all. Running to the public officer, they rage and froth when the officer refuses to carry their private burdens upon his shoulders." While Marchand was thus musing, he was pleased at the appearance of Pletcher and Butler at his office door.

"Come in, gentlemen. I am sorry you did not come sooner, so as to have heard the complaint of some of your friends

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against the telephone company. Though I doubt if they would have made complaint in your presence. It was really amusing."

"Oh, well, Marchand, I sympathize with you. I was once Mayor, you know, and I know how it is," said Pletcher.

"Give the people a chance to complain, for they have enough cause, I am sure," replied Walter. "I have discovered one thing, however, and that is, when a fellow complains but refuses to become identified with his own complaint, there is little use giving any heed to him."

"Walter, old fellow," said Butler, "I must congratulate you and your administration upon the fact that we are getting better service out of all the public utility corporations than we ever did before. There is a marked change for the better in all the departments of the city government, too. In fact, there is a marked change in the very appearance of the entire city."

"I hope we shall have no fever here this coming summer," said Pletcher. "And we will not have if we sanitize the city."

"If we can once have the people to understand that they should willingly and freely join in the movement to clean up the city thoroughly," said Walter, "there would be little trouble in preventing fever."

"When you tackle the cleaning-up question, old fellow, you will be up against the hardest job a Mayor ever has to tackle," suggested Pletcher. "I tried that once, and I made more enemies at it than I did otherwise in my whole official career. I simply had to not only threaten the people with arrest and punishment, but had to actually arrest many of them and fine them before I could get them to turn a wheel."

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"If it require the entire police force of the city, I am determined that the work of sanitation shall be accomplished, and accomplished in a thorough manner," said Marchand. "Butler, you may as well announce in the papers that fact. I do not want anybody to misunderstand what I intend to have done. We have passed an ordinance making it an offense for any citizen to fail or refuse to thoroughly clean and sanitize his premises within twenty-four hours after receiving notice from the city government so to do. That law will be strictly enforced."

"You had better never run for another office, if you enforce that law," said Pletcher.

"By thunder, I am not thinking about another office. I am simply going to perform the duties devolving upon me while I am Mayor of this city. I can not afford to allow yellow fever to break out in this town, just because the people don't like to clean up their premises. Our city must be thoroughly cleaned up, and I shall see that it is done, regardless of the howling critics, if any there be."

"Oh, you are eminently correct. That is the only thing to do, and I trust you shall not falter when the howl sets in," said Pletcher.

"I understand there is considerable agitation up the country, looking to the enactment by Congress of a national quarantine law," suggested Butler. "I see it is being agitated by some of the interior States."

"That is a matter that must necessarily follow the ever increasing negligence and laggardness of the coast cities. I do not know that a national quarantine would be any better than a state quarantine, but I do fear that under the national regulation our coast country might be absolutely

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ruined, by having our Gulf ports closed six months out of the year. It must not be forgotten that the Atlantic and Pacific ports, together with the trans-continental railroads, can care for all the export and import business of our country, if necessary. And if there be half as much corruption in the politics of this country as there appears to be, it would not take long to bring about the closing of the Gulf ports of trade. Neither can the people of the interior of our country be blamed for their uneasiness about contagious diseases. If the Gulf coast cities are too indolent, and lack that civic pride which alone should warrant them in keeping their communities in thorough sanitary condition, so as to prevent the origination and spread of contagions, the interior portions of the country will be warranted in resorting to such means as will bring safety to themselves, whether it result in closing the Gulf ports, or not."

"Suppose you put this matter straight before the people in the columns of your papers, Butler," said Pletcher, "and I am of the impression that the people will awaken to the true situation."

"I will be glad to do so, and I believe it will have a good effect."

"Marchand, you have put this subject before me in a new light. I shall make it the slogan of my campaign in my race for the Legislature."

"I thank you, Pletcher, for your kind assistance. A good city government should always be backed up by capable and efficient representatives in the State Legislature. I am glad you are a candidate, for I may now show my appreciation of your many acts of kindness toward me in my struggle for a better local government."

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CHAPTER XXVII.

BREAKING THE TIES.

"Butler, for some time I have been wanting to have a confidential talk with you about a delicate matter, and that is why I invited you to come here, at this time, where we will be neither overheard nor disturbed," said Walter, one Sunday morning, when Joe Butler came to Marchand's private law office, at the request of his friend.

"All right, Walter, I am at your service. Proceed."

"You are not in a hurry, are you?"

"No; no hurry."

"Have a cigar? These are made of Texas-grown Havana tobacco, and are a present to me from a Texas girl."

"Oho, I see. Miss Dorothy Rathbone is Texas through and through. She is for Texas first, in everything."

"I like that spirit in a person, and I think it is more suitable to Dorothy than any girl that I know."

"By the way, you have not taken that Texas trip your heart is so set upon."

"No, but I am going just as soon as we finish up this work of sanitation, which will be in about a week from now."

"Walter, I do not usually speculate upon other people's affairs, but I'll bet a new hat that I can guess who Dorothy Rathbone's husband will be."

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"You don't base your guess upon the gift of a box of cigars, do you?"

"Never mind about what I base my guess upon. I congratulate the man who captures that little prize, whoever he may be. I was foolish enough, for a time, to dream a few dreams, but I soon awakened to the knowledge of a fact certain, and I quit dreaming."

"Why, Joe, did you fall in love with Dorothy?"

"Not exactly. But I was mighty near to it. I suppose conflicting emotions, circumstances, and a failure of disposition on her part was about all that prevented."

"What conflicting emotions and circumstances prevented, pray?"

"Oh, I do not care to mention. It was only a temporary dream, and secondary to a holier, higher ambition of which I shall not now speak. Maybe, later, I shall confide."

"Well, Joe, I am frank to confess to you that I have been thinking seriously of proposing marriage to Dorothy. What suggestion can you make?"

"I would suggest that when you make the proposal, be on the ground in person, so as to back up the proposal with all arguments that may appear necessary."

"I don't understand you. What arguments are there to make? She knows me, and if she loves me, she will accept. If not, why——"

"Yes, now you have it, 'why—'? Well, a girl may have other plans half matured, or perhaps wholly matured. It is like trading horses, sight unseen. One owner may have two or three trades on the string, and he might reject an offer from the fourth fellow, for fear it would not be as good a trade as one of the others."

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"Ha, ha, ha, Butler. You have a strange way of putting the matter, yet I can see some philosophy in your theory."

"If you have never indicated to the girl that you have some intention of marriage, and that your mind is inclined toward Texas, it would be the better plan to throw out that hint before you make a cold-blooded proposition on paper. Give her time to readjust any affairs needing readjustment, in case she prefers you to some other person. A girl never marries a man she doesn't love, except for cause, but she would break a hundred engagements to marry the man of her choice."

"I have no reason to believe that the young lady loves me, so I do not see where your theory can benefit me, should I conclude to carry out the half intention."

"By being right on the spot to argue and press your claims. If you make no better lover than you do a politician, your chances to win Dorothy Rathbone are mighty slim, provided some other fellow is in the race. Brace up, old fellow."

"Be careful, Joe, I fear you will have another case of snakes. Ha, ha!"

"See here, Walter, you were to let up on the snake story."

"But you never gave me that birthday present."

"That is true, but you never told me when your birthday came around. You are at fault."

"Say, Butler, is it not strange that our family record does not disclose the date of my birth? I have lately been puzzled about it, but being so very busy with my duties, have had no time to look into the matter. I'll do that, however, immediately upon my return from Texas."

"Your father should be able to explain the family record,

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I think. But I presume those things often occur, so it is nothing to be worried about."

"Oh, no, I reckon not. I have spoken to you before about the strange condition existing between sister Edith and myself. We have been more like sweethearts than brother and sister. It has long been a puzzle to me. On that account, I suppose, I never before felt a desire to marry. But of late I see that both she and I have made a serious mistake. I dread to think of marrying while dear little Edith is single, for I know she has had hundreds of opportunities which she permitted to pass by, just because our lives were so mutually pleasant and happy.

"If Edith knew that your intentions are to marry, she would, perhaps, shape her course differently. Do you not think so?"

"Perhaps so, but would the opportunity ever come to marry the man she could love, and who would prove a good husband to her? That is the question that disturbs me."

"Of course, that is an open question, and the future alone can solve it. She would never marry a man she did not love, I am thinking."

"That is a certainty. I know that little woman too well to ever think otherwise. Whoever gains her consent to marriage may rest assured that he has the love and esteem of one of the best girls that ever lived."

"Ah, well," sighed Butler, "if I could but hope to be that man, my life would be happy, even in the hope."

"Butler, you and I have been the best of friends since our college days. I know you to be a man who is worthy the love, respect and esteem of any woman. I told my mother some time ago that if Edith would be so fortunate as to marry

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as good a man as you, I would be happy, and mother indorsed those remarks."

"Walter, my dear, good friend," said Butler, as he grasped the hand of Marchand, "I thank God for those kind words from you, and if I but knew that Edith felt kindly toward me, I would be the happiest man in the world."

Perhaps she does. In fact, I know she likes you above all of her gentlemen acquaintances. Further than that, I know nothing. I assure you that any word that I can say, if you wish it, will be said in your behalf."

"Walter, again I thank you with all my heart. Oh, I shall not dare to hope for such good fortune; it will set my brain on fire."

"No, Butler, do not build up too strong a hope, unless you are right on the ground. It is like trading horses, you know."

"Please don't mention a horse trade in the same breath; it is an awfully serious matter with me."

"You have not forgotten your horse trade in my case, have you? I was only evening up with you. My case is serious, too."

"Is it? All right, I forgive you."

"Hello, some one is unlocking the front office door. I'll see who it can be."

Walter went into the front office, and after a few moments returned with several letters in his hand, saying: "It was Mr. Walton. He always goes to the postoffice on Sundays for our mail. Pardon me for perusing the letters hastily, will you?"

"Certainly, certainly. I'll try another one of Miss Dorothy's Texas cigars, and read The Daily Telegram while you

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are engaged with your mail. I see you have a tinted envelope with a waxen seal, so I promise to become thoroughly absorbed until you arouse me."

"Here's a letter from the old Captain's lawyers, and they are willing to settle the case of your 'Prince of Pearls' on the basis proposed. They say they shall expect a settlement by Tuesday. How is that? I am mighty glad, for with that case settled, I shall be practically free from worry about court matters during my Texas visit."

"I am also glad they have accepted our proposition of settlement, for several times I feared the old man was about to die. He is now recovering rapidly from his long spell of fever, however, and is able to talk plainly and make his wants known. Of course, he is not permitted to talk much, though he seems anxious to do so. He apparently has some great secret upon his mind, but I have cautioned him against saying anything about it to any one but myself, and he seems to recognize the importance of prudence and caution. He will be delighted to learn of the settlement of his case, I am sure."

"Have you any idea of the value of those jewels, Butler?"

"Not definite. I had Mr. Wilton, the jeweler, and Mr. Joseph, his lapidist, examine them, and they roughly estimated their value at one hundred thousand dollars. You know he has, besides, quite a large collection of the most valuable pearls in the leather belt which he wears around his body. I have disposed of some of those for expense money, and the lowest price for which I sold a single one of them was three hundred dollars. I presume, that after his legal matters are settled, his estate will be worth one hundred thousand dollars."

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"Has the old fellow any relatives, or have you ascertained?"

"I have not. While delirious from the effect of his fever, he would frequently talk, but the only words I could understand were, 'boy, my boy.' Since his fever has gone, I have not permitted him to talk. Before many days, however, he will be strong enough to tell his story. I would not be surprised if he should tell a story worth publishing."

"I shall be interested, and, if I am then in Texas and you publish an account of it, send me a copy, will you?"

"To be sure. Dorothy gets The Daily Telegram right along. She sent in her subscription, and I returned it, stating that the paper was being sent her as the compliments of the Mayor of this city."

"You did? You're a wonder, Joe Butler. I did not think that of you."

"Pshaw! I knew you loved that girl all the time, and, if I'd had a real good opportunity, I would have courted her for and on your account. Don't let me disturb you longer, you are anxious, I know, to read the letter in that tinted envelope with a waxen seal, so go ahead."

When Walter had finished reading his letters, he arose in a quiet manner and walked back and forth through the room, his hands set deep in his trousers pockets, his head bowed, and with an expression of countenance betokening serious thought, all of which was observed by Butler from behind the corner of the paper in which he was supposed to be wholly absorbed. Butler suddenly dropped his paper, and looking straight at Marchand, said:

"Well?" which arrested the dreamer's attention, and to which he replied, in mockery:

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"Well?"

"Is it so serious as all that?" inquired Butler.

"Why, was I so serious? I was simply wishing that this work of sanitation was over with, for then I would go to Texas, at once. That is all. Serious? No, but I am getting anxious."

"That is a mighty good sign that you are interested more in seeing some person in Texas than you are in simply seeing the country."

"You are right, old fellow, and I intend to go, just about a week from today. I shall talk it all over with sister, and lay my plans fully before her."

"I think you are taking the wiser course. I must be going, Walter, it is nearly the noon hour, and I was to meet Pletcher at eleven o'clock. I'll see you tomorrow, so good day."

"Hold on—not so fast, please. Miss Landon from up the state is visiting at our house, and I arranged for you to go driving with us at half past three, this afternoon. Be sure to be on hand."

"All right. So long."

"That man Butler is a noble fellow," mused Walter, when he was alone, "and I hope he will find favor with Edith, bless the dear, sweet girl. It would be mighty mean in me to go away and get married, leaving my dear little sister with no companion, no one to love and cherish. I just can not do it. By jove, I must go home, the folks will be waiting for me."

There had been no break of confidence between brother and sister, except for the lack of opportunity. The previous winter season had been well filled with visitors, and the summer and early fall were occupied by vacations, out-

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ings, and what not, for those of "The Cedars" who were not required, per force of public life, to remain at their post of duty, so that Walter and Edith were not afforded the opportunity of each other's company and companionship, as formerly. However, their strange attachment for each other had not lessened one whit, and seeing more of others made the strangeness of their situation appear more strange to each of them. A few days prior to Walter's departure for Texas, an opportunity was afforded the brother and sister for an uninterrupted and confidential conference. Walter, as usual, was seated in the old rustic out in the grounds, at an early morning hour, scanning the daily paper, when Edith came tripping out to him.

"I think you are awfully selfish, brother, to come away out here by yourself every morning," said Edith.

"It is about the only opportunity I have of reading The Daily Telegram. Do you know that fellow Butler has made the Telegram the best paper in the state? He is a wonder, that man."

"How so, brother?"

"Well, in almost any way one may take him. He is full of energy, always hard at work, and makes a success of everything he undertakes. I declare, it is marvelous."

"Well, a man who works as zealously as he, deserves success. Don't you think so?"

"Certainly. But why does he do it? He has no wife, no children, no one to love or care for, and none but his friends to love him."

"Perhaps he intends, some day, to have a family."

"No doubt. If I were a woman, I would envy the girl who becomes his wife."

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"Why, brother?"

"Because he is so gentle and kind by nature. He is so noble of heart, so pure of mind, that he will make his wife, whoever she be, the happiest woman in the world, if she love him at all."

"I have often thought that, if I were to ever marry, I would prefer a husband just like you or Mr. Butler."

"And I have often thought if I were to ever marry, I'd prefer a wife just like you, or —"

"Oh, I know a girl who, mother says, is my duplicate," interjected Edith.

"Pray, who may she be?"

"Oh, Walter Marchand, you can not play that smoothly enough. Well, she writes a nice, bold hand, uses tinted paper, and lives in Texas. There, now!"

"Oh, yes, you mean Dorothy?"

"Certainly. You knew whom I meant. Mother says you like Dorothy a great deal. I am glad, if you do, for she is a good girl, and we have been such dear friends."

"Dear, little sister, I am going to confide in you fully. We have been such loving friends and companions ever since we were children, that I dread to think of the future. But the future is before us and we must face it. Now, dear, please do not cry. I know it breaks your heart, and it breaks mine also. Please, darling, don't."

"Oh, my dear, good brother, I know we must part. Mother has told me several times that it must come to this, but oh, how happy all those years have been. I wish they could continue forever."

"We might have known, and had we not loved each other

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so, we would have known that we should not thus continue indefinitely."

"Oh, brother, how we talked of our future when we were children. How proud I was in my love for you, and that love is stronger today than ever, since I must lose you. But I will not stand in your way, dear. I will not cling to you so as to darken your life and make you miserable."

"Please, darling Edith, do not say those words, for they burn into my very soul. You do not know, except from your own heart-pangs, how much I love you, and how I have always loved you. O, darling sister, that love will linger within my soul unto my expiring breath and will fly with my spirit to its eternal home. I may cherish another, but to love as I have always loved you, is beyond all possibility. Please, dear, don't cry. Listen to me, little sweetheart, for I want to tell you what I think is best for both of us. If we each shall find a person whom we may cherish and respect, it would be better that we take our separate ways. But we will always be sweethearts, for since we are brother and sister, we may love eternally."

"It is easy for a man to say that, but you know a woman can not make her own selection, nor love more than one at a time."

"No, sweetheart, I know that, but if you ever see a man whom you think you could like, if you will confide in me, maybe we can manage it."

"Please, Walter, do not speak of so holy a thing in such fashion."

"Why, little angel, I meant no harm. I only wanted to check those crystal drops upon your pretty cheeks by lead-

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ing your mind from our sorrow. That was all. But, say, sister, what think you of my suggestion?"

Oh, brother, let me have time to think. But I know it will be best, for I have talked it all over with mother. She thinks Mr. Butler rather likes me. Do you think he does?"

"Do you like Mr. Butler, Edith?"

"You answer my question first."

"I will, if you promise to answer my question next. Will you?"

"I promise."

"Yes, I think Joe Butler not only likes you, but thinks a great deal of you. Now, your answer."

"I like Mr. Butler, of course. Who could help liking and respecting him?"

"I am, indeed, glad to hear you say that, for now I will tell you, I know he loves you with his whole soul."

"How do you know, brother?"

"Because, I overheard him talking to himself."

"Eavesdropping?"

"No, but when I heard him mention your name, I could not refrain from listening."

"What did he say, please?"

"Now, sister dear, I have said too much already. Perhaps I should have remained silent."

"No, you should not. I am glad to know that Mr. Butler thinks well of me, since I must lose you. Oh, Walter, I can not bear to think of losing you."

"Now, darling sister, do not think of it. You will not lose me. It is wrong, really, it is a sin for us to go on in the same way, indefinitely. We are committing a crime against ourselves. Now, let us both be strong, and resolve

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to find happiness in a married life, where we may be surrounded with loved ones. Shall it be so, dear Edith?"

"Yes, brother, it shall be so. Henceforth, I will teach you how to be strong, if I am your little sister. Now, you have my full consent, if you marry the girl I shall name. Will you?"

"I will, depending upon two conditions."

"Name them."

"One is, provided she will have me, and the other is, provided you shall marry the person I shall name. Will you?"

"I will, under those same conditions."

"Very well, name the girl."

"I name Dorothy Rathbone."

"I could not have been better pleased. Now, brace up, little sister, and let me name your husband, to be. Are you ready?"

"I am ready, fire ahead."

"I shall name Mr. Joseph Butler, my dearest and best friend."

"I am satisfied, if it so please God."

"Well, I know Butler will be pleased, whether—"

"Don't, brother, it is too sacred."

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

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When suit was instituted in the courts for the possession of the valuable pearls comprising the estate of the strange old man, it was necessary to employ some name by which the plaintiff should be known in the law. The strange old man could neither speak nor write any language by which he could make known his name, if, indeed, he knew, consequently the name, John Hayes, was adopted for the purpose. Thereafter, the strange old gentleman was generally designated by that name, except upon occasions, when he was jocularly referred to as the "Prince of Pearls." Being wholly incapacitated for the transaction of any business, or to care for his own property, LeBerte Marchand was, by the court, appointed the guardian of his person and estate. Court matters dragged along in their usual dilatory way, until now the litigation had ended, and John Hayes was rapidly recovering his former condition of mind and intelligence, so that there appeared little necessity for the continuation of the guardianship.

Butler had frequently consulted with the legal guardian, and it was understood that Marchand should be relieved of the burden and responsibility of the position at an early date. It was realized that in the event of Marchand's sud-

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den death, an event not beyond possibility, there might some complication arise that would possibly entangle or involve his own estate, or that of his family. Joe Butler was aware of LeBerte Marchand's anxiety in the matter, and so informed the son, whereupon it was agreed that the matter of the guardianship should be closed, the guardian fully released, before Walter's departure for Texas, and the same was accordingly done.

When LeBerte Marchand was informed by Butler that the matter of the guardianship had been closed, the final report approved by the court, and the guardian and his bondsmen fully discharged and released of all further responsibility, he gave a sigh of relief and thanked Butler for his friendly services in the matter.

"Now, my friend Butler," said LeBerte Marchand, "you are deserving of a handsome reward for your services and your conduct of this whole matter. I have had full and implicit confidence in your integrity and ability, throughout the proceedings. You have the respect, esteem and love of my entire household. You are entitled to more than that as compensation for the noble and unselfish sacrifices you have made in behalf of my firm, and of my son in particular. I therefore beg of you to accept this check from me as a part only, of the compensation to which you are justly entitled."

"Pardon me, my dear Mr. Marchand," said Butler, "my poor services were not rendered with a view to compensation. My honesty and integrity have no price. What I have done for the poor old fellow Hayes, I assure you, was done in the cause of justice and humanity. If what I have done in my career in this city has benefited you or your family, I shall feel well compensated in the knowledge of that fact,

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and could not be induced to accept a monetary consideration. I thank you for the words you have spoken, and I assure you they are worth more than gold."

"Butler, you are a noble fellow. I shall always hold you as one of my best friends. We would all be pleased to see you more frequently at 'The Cedars.'"

"And nothing would afford me more pleasure, I assure you, Mr. Marchand, but you know how my time is occupied with business matters. There is also another barrier, and I feel that I should mention it to you. I fear to permit myself too much in the very agreeable and charming society of Miss Edith."

"Why so, Butler. Edith will not eat you, I am sure."

"Certainly, but I can not withstand the power of her personal charms. The truth is, that I am already in love with her, deeply in love."

"I am real glad to hear you say so. Knowing that fact, I now more earnestly press you to let us see you more frequently in our home."

"I thank you for the generous expression. Did I dare to hope that my love for your daughter was reciprocated, I should beg your consent that I might prosper my ambition."

"Friend Butler, you have my full consent. I should be proud of you as my son, and let me hope that your ambition may prosper."

"I am indeed grateful for your goodness to me. I have never intimated to your daughter the fact that I love her, and would have never done so without her father's full consent. Now, that you have granted it, I am very happy, indeed."

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"By the way, Butler, what have you done with the old man Hayes? What are his future plans?"

"He is still at the infirmary and will remain for a few weeks longer. I do not know, fully, his future plans. He will, no doubt, begin to search for his family, when his full strength returns."

"What family has he; do you know?"

"Really, I have not questioned him about his past life, nor have I as yet permitted him to tell his story. I intend to have him give me a detailed statement, ere long, of his career. I think he has an interesting past, and I shall be anxious to hear it."

"Has he ever told you how he came into the possession of that brass army button?"

"If I remember correctly, I think he indicated that he had been a soldier."

"On which side?"

"The Federal side, I believe. But I paid little attention to his mutterings, as I preferred to await his full recovery. He has constantly talked about his boy, though so indistinctly, and I paid so little heed to it, that I only caught the idea that he had a son, and was anxious to find him."

"Did he mention the name?"

"No, not that I know of. When he subscribed the court papers in the closing of the guardianship matters, of course, he was required to subscribe the name of John Hayes. He hesitated before signing, and looked at me in a puzzled manner. I explained the situation to him, and he then signed the papers, but said he was not signing his own name. I asked him if he remembered his own name. He shook his head, indicating that he was in doubt."

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"I want to request of you, Mr. Butler, that when you learn the man's past history that you give me an outline of it before you make it public. I shall not now give my reasons, but in asking this of you, I may be doing you the greatest favor you could possibly ask."

"I shall be glad to make known to you the details of the man's past life at the earliest moment, keeping the same secret from the public, as you request."

"Again, I thank you, friend Butler, and with the hope that I may sometime call you my son, I bid you God speed."

"I shall never be able to repay you for all your goodness to me. And now, I shall leave you. Good day."

When Butler had gone, LeBerte Marchand sank slowly back in his big easy chair, to think and muse. He had not frequented his office of late on account of a feebleness which had crept rapidly upon him during the last few years, and when he did go to the office he preferred the quietude and comfort of his private room and the large lounging chair.

"I do not in the least suspect that this man John Hayes is the former husband of my wife," mused Marchand, "but there can be no harm done by keeping a vigilant outlook for possibilities. One can never tell what will happen. Every year since the close of the Civil war, I have heard of one or more strange incidents regarding the reappearance of long lost husbands, sons and others. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the first husband should turn up, 'though it is wholly improbable.

"And I have been the legal guardian of this strange old man. Would it not be a striking coincident if he were my wife's first husband? Oh, well, there is no danger of that,

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I am sure. But what if he should prove to be the father of Walter? Well, I could deny that claim, for Walter remembers nothing beyond the date of his entering my home. None of my family even suspect that Walter is not my son, and the neighbors have always been in ignorance of the facts. No, I need not fear along that line. The only possibility I need provide against is the possibility of my wife's first husband reappearing. I can not see how she should ever be discovered, situated in my home as my wife. No one here, except my own immediate family, is acquainted with her life-story, and I am sure my family has never made the facts known. Why, they even do not know that Walter is not my son. I have kept that secret from my family and from the world. It is sacred from all, save and except as it might be learned from the statement in my iron safe at home. No one can ever know that secret until my lips are sealed in death, or until I shall believe it for the best to divulge it. If Edith were to marry Butler, I feel confident that Walter would soon find a life-companion. In that event, I could see no great harm in letting each of them know the truth, for then the world need never discover the fact that Walter and Edith were not brother and sister. If my son and daughter knew the truth, I fear no power on earth would prevent their becoming man and wife. Yet, if they otherwise marry, they will be happier, the status of my family will not be disturbed, and I shall go to my grave in peace and quiet, bearing the respect of all who know me. Oh, well, there is no use borrowing trouble. Everything is working along finely, now that Butler is in love with Edith, and Walter is likely to fall in love with that little Texas sprite. My, but she is a bright little gem, is that Dorothy. I would

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dearly love to have Walter become her husband. She is just the kind of a woman that has been the making of governors, and even presidents. I hope for the best, anyhow."

Marchand's reverie was interrupted by the entrance of his son.

"I have come to you, father," said Walter, "for a conference and advice on certain matters about which you are, no doubt, better able to judge than am I."

"What's wrong now, Walter? Something out of gear in the political machinery of the city?"

"Not exactly, though there is considerable trouble in having the citizens clean up and sanitize their premises. I've had to cause the arrest of several persons for their refusal to obey the law in regard to sanitation. I have also had a warrant issued for the arrest of Paul Jones, who is one of your good friends. He absolutely refuses to obey the law, and declares he will not be forced to clean up his premises."

"What are you going to do about it, Walter?"

"Have him arrested and put in jail, unless he cleans up his premises as required by the city ordinance."

"That kind of treatment will appear a little harsh to a good citizen, will it not?"

"He knows the law, and he knows that all of his neighbors have done their duty. He refuses, claiming that he has a right to use his property as he sees fit. It is not fair to all other good citizens to allow any one man, or any number of men, to keep their property in a condition that may invite or breed epidemic. I have instructed the officers to arrest Mr. Jones unless he forthwith sanitates his premises."

"That will make a bitter enemy for you, if he be ar-

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rested. I do not see that you can do otherwise, however."

"I presume an officer is often called upon to make enemies in the faithful discharge of his public duty. I shall be criticised by all good citizens if I fail to carry out my work strictly. I will not falter, if I be required to arrest even you, should you refuse to do your duty."

"You are right, Walter. There is no other course for you to pursue. You may be criticised now, but should you fail to use every facility within your power to rid the city of its filth and put it in good condition, you would later be condemned in stronger terms."

"I anticipate little further trouble in this work. Jones is the only man of any prominence who has acted ugly about the matter, and his neighbors are openly criticising him. The people, generally, are aware of the necessity and are showing the right spirit."

"My observation has been that the people take an intelligent interest in matters of public welfare when they have confidence in the officers at the helm. If they lack this confidence, they take little interest."

"I have about concluded that when my term of office expires, I shall retire from public life. That is, I shall not hold any other public office. Public office to me, is nagging and irritating at times. I appreciate the honor, but I think one must have a thick skin and a dull conscience if he be not disturbed by the uncalled for criticisms, insinuations and reflections. I think I should better enjoy the simple and quieter life. Especially, should I ever marry."

"So you think you might marry? Well, I think that is sensible. I wonder that you had not done that long ago."

"Oh, well, I thought I had reason, but I see I had not."

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"Who is to be the happy bride?"

"Oh, goodness knows, father, I have not the least conception."

"I had thought that, perhaps, your contemplated visit to Texas might not be altogether for the purpose of seeing the country."

"The wish was not the father of the thought, was it?"

"I am not so certain about that. If I were a young man, with no ties, I should—"

"Ah, there, father, be careful. You know it takes two to make a bargain. There is many a slip, you know."

"Walter, pardon me, but when you came in here you indicated that you came for confidential purposes. If I have kept you from your real purpose, you must forgive me. I am now at your service."

"Pardon is granted, but we were getting along toward the matter I had thought of consulting you about."

"Oh, were we?" replied the father, with a knowing smile. "You see we old men are somewhat dull, at times, and so I am again forced to beg your pardon for interrupting."

"Not at all. I think you are pretty good at divining one's thoughts. I want to know your opinion of Dorothy Rathbone, if you care to express yourself."

"I had never really thought much about her. She is a fairly good-looking girl, I think."

"Is that all?"

"Well, I don't exactly understand you, Walter."

"I mean, would she make a good wife, in your opinion?"

"Do you mean, would she make a good wife for Walter Marchand?"

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"Well, if you must pin me down to it, that is exactly what I mean."

"In all probability, Dorothy Rathbone would make you the very best wife possible for you to obtain, provided that you were a good husband."

"The latter goes without saying. I should be a good husband, I know."

"I think you would be, for you are old enough, now, to know how to treat a wife. Some men don't know enough."

"That is true. If Edith and I were not brother and sister—"

"Ah, well, don't bother your head about that. You and Edith do nicely as brother and sister, but as husband and wife, you never would be happy. So please let us not mention that any more."

"You are not averse to talking upon the possibilities are you, father?"

"There are no such possibilities. I do not understand you, my son."

"Well, perhaps, I don't quite understand myself on that matter, so I will not trouble you with it. If you are ready to go home for the day, I will join you."

"Yes, I think I shall go home. Can you not call up Butler and have him join us at 'The Cedars' tonight? I begin to have a warm spot in my heart for that fellow Butler."

"Yes, I will telephone him from the house, upon our arrival."

When Butler arrived at "The Cedars" later in the evening, he felt that he was with his friends, indeed. From the conversations he had had with the father and son, he knew that none were his more earnest well-wishers than were they.

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He could not doubt the kindly feeling of the mother, as reflected in her eyes and voice. In fact, he thought he could discern a more tender expression in Edith's voice, but of that he was not so sure. There was such graceful modesty in the retiring nature of Edith that held in check the bold approaches of men, which in her bore a double charm for Butler. It was this gentle modesty that would make of her a model wife. Butler recognized that fact as his thoughts frequently drifted with the shadow of his ambition to the home where she should be as a crowned queen.

He wondered whether Edith divined his thoughts and intentions, or whether she knew of the conversation between her father, her brother and himself. If so, might she not feel that a mean advantage was being taken against her? Certainly nothing of the kind was intended by either. They were all her best friends. No, he would not allow his mind to become filled with doubts and misgivings. He would conduct himself as he always had done, and await developments. Over-anxiety and undue haste might ruin his plans, altogether. The consent and good will of the father and brother was all very good, but there was something more important. The love and affection of a woman was not to be had for the asking, nor by the consent of family, alone. Edith was a woman with a mind of her own, a heart of her own, and with a love of her own, that neither father nor brother could presume to direct.

While Butler thus permitted his thoughts to ramble during intervals in the general conversation, he realized that his disposition of mind was being observed, but he was powerless to prevent it. He racked his brain for some topic or theme of general interest, but the more he tried the more he

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recognized his inability so to do. He had never found himself in such a predicament before, and it was, under the circumstances, distressing to him. He doubted the propriety of suggesting anything political, but something, political or otherwise, which would divert his thoughts from their present trend, must be suggested. Happily, he was relieved by LeBerte Marchand.

"What do the papers over the country have to say, Mr. Butler, about the probability of yellow fever?" said the old gentleman.

"The general expression is to the effect, that if the coast cities were more careful, and more attentive to the question of strict sanitation, there would be little fear of epidemic."

"Well, I am sure their belief is well grounded. I notice the comment by the state press on the work being done by the present city administration, along that line. It is gratifying to know that the people, generally, approve."

"I think the people of the interior have the moral right to expect, and the legal right to demand, that all coast towns and cities, or any other places where contagions may propagate or become epidemic, shall keep scrupulously clean and in good sanitary condition," said Walter. "The interior portions of the country have an interest in our coast cities, but their own lives, and their own security is of more importance. The failure of the coast cities to give this matter careful attention will, eventually, result in a national quarantine law."

"Oh, yes, that recalls to mind the remark of Miss Bilby, one of our neighbors," said Edith. "Her father felt indignant when he was served with notice to clean up his premises, and I presume Miss Bilby obtained her fund of knowledge

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upon the subject from her father. She argued that it was the duty of the National government to look after and prevent epidemics, especially yellow fever, because it was always brought into the coast cities from some ocean-going vessel. Several of the party discussed the matter, but I said nothing, owing to the fact of my brother being the Mayor. I did not know that there was any disposition to criticise the city authorities, or so I pretended."

"Well, you must expect people to complain," said Walter, "even when they do the things they know to be for their own personal good, especially if government directs them so to do."

"For my own enlightenment on the subject," said the elder Marchand, "what objection should there be to a national quarantine?"

"I am not a statesman nor a philosopher," returned Walter, "but I will lay the premise that, a national quarantine is, primarily, wrong in principle. From the standpoint of political science, or the science of government, the responsibility for and the preservation of, the public health rests with the state government. To illustrate, suppose I became afflicted with insanity. What government cares for me? Does the national government take charge of me? Does the city government take charge of me? No, neither. It is the state government which takes me in charge, protects me against harm, and also protects the citizens against harm from me. True, local authorities take the first steps in the proceedings, but those steps are directed and authorized by state laws. Take the criminals, the forger, the murderer, and all others who commit high crime. Are they not subject to the police powers and regulations of the state? Why?

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For the preservation of the safety, protection and peace of the people.

"The safeguarding and preservation of the public health, the protection of life, liberty and property of the people has always been regarded as not only the absolute duty, but the inalienable rights of state government. These rights and duties can not be shifted, neither can they be alienated without changing the policy of our general government, and at the same time robbing the people of the state of a precious right and privilege that they should never lose. How any man, who ever believed in the doctrine of state rights, could voluntarily abandon the privilege of self-regulation of the police powers of the state, I can not understand."

"Aside from the science of government," suggested Butler, "the theory of a national quarantine might not be so bad as would become the effects of its operation."

"How is that, Mr. Butler," queried Edith, anxious for his words of wisdom.

"In theory, the first thing a citizen thinks of, perhaps, in connection with the idea of a national quarantine law, is the proposition that he will be relieved of the cost of the quarantine, which amounts to about fifty thousand dollars per year to each of the Gulf states, but to the individual citizen, the price of a cigar. He forgets the value to himself and to his neighbors of local self-government, and the right to regulate the police powers of the state. He thinks only of the burden of the cost by way of taxes, overlooking the fact that the individual cost is infinitesimal.

"Now, in the actual practice of a national quarantine, there are several matters of which the people of the Gulf States should carefully consider. Sea ports and transporta-

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tion lines are always envious of each other, always zealous for business. They are sometimes not so generous and kindly disposed that they would not injure and destroy a competitor in order to gain for themselves. So, it might be well to consider the future welfare of the Gulf ports before clamoring too loudly for a national quarantine."

"I am quite interested in your defense of State Rights and our Gulf ports, Mr. Butler. Won't you please illustrate your deductions by a hypothetical case?" said Edith.

"If, by so doing, I shall the better explain my contention, I shall do so. Take, for instance, the large cargoes of sugar, coffee and other produce that you see every day brought into our port, here. Now, let the port be closed on account of an epidemic, and where would those cargoes land? The answer must be, that they would go to the Atlantic ports, such as Boston, New York and other places. While the major portion of those cargoes were for New Orleans and the interior, say St. Louis, Chicago, Kansas City and other centers, they must go via the Atlantic seaports, because the Gulf ports are closed. The lines of transportation entering the eastern ports are then thrilled with delight, for they will thereby obtain a long haul in order for the goods to reach their destination.

"Now, with a corps of young marine hospital physicians, who had procured their positions more through the political influence of their friends than by reason of their brains, education and experience, in charge of the quarantine stations along the Gulf, it would be a great streak of fortune if our ports were not closed six months in the year. Mistaken diagnoses often occur in all disease, and not infrequently in yellow fever. A mistake in the diagnosis of one case

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would close our ports and result in damage and injury to our state and our people, amounting to millions of dollars. Where then is the price of our citizen's cigar? I shall not speak of the political phase of the question. Mistaken diagnoses afford sufficient basis for the illustration. It is possible, however, that the Gulf ports, through a system of political chicanery, could be permanently closed, but not probable, even with the worst conditions of which we can conceive."

"No, Butler," said Walter, "the people of the middle states and the great west would never submit to such outrages. The Gulf ports have already demonstrated to those people that they are nearer the markets of the world by thousands of miles than before the opening of these ports. The people of the middle west will never submit to such outrages upon the Gulf ports. The greatest enemies our ports have at the present time, from an epidemic standpoint, are the cities and towns of the Gulf coast. If they will continue in their neglect and refusal to take the necessary precautions, they will learn the sad lesson which you have so forcibly demonstrated."

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CHAPTER XXIX.

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With a heavy heart did Edith bid her brother good-bye and God speed, as he took his departure for Texas. There was some consolation for the poor girl, however, as Joe Butler was at the train to bid his friend good-bye, and to the good care of Butler did the brother commend his sister. To no other person could Edith have been better commended, nor, in fact, could she have been better pleased. Butler was the very soul of honor, and Edith really liked him better than she knew.

Walter Marchand had two objects in visiting Texas. One was to learn more about the state. The other object was to enjoy the company of Dorothy Rathbone, and, probably, ascertain whether she would be a suitable and agreeable life-companion. He had, of late, been reading a great deal about Texas, so that he visited the state as an ardent student of the history, present conditions and future possibilities of that great commonwealth. To Walter Marchand, a new world was beginning to unfold before his mental vision. He had lived within a narrow sphere, and had seen little of the great world, although he had been quite a reader. His activities had been confined to college life, the practice of law, and local office-holding. He now became eager to step out

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into broader fields where he could observe the great, throbbing, pulsing world of human activity. His visit to Texas would be the first step toward the fulfilling of that desire.

"Walter Marchand, you don't know how glad we are to have you visit us. Why in the world did you not bring Edith with you?" said Dorothy, when the visitor arrived in Houston.

"Well, the pleasure is not all your own, I assure you," returned Walter. "You must accord me a portion of the pleasure in again meeting the fair and charming little friend of my sister."

"Oh, you flatterer, you know you do not mean half you say. I thought you a solemn, stern man of business, unused to the graceful customs of the social world."

"Well, Dorothy, you see you have misjudged me. What I was at home, I need not be in Texas. You have so much room in this great big state, that the moment one crosses the border line, he is possessed with a sense of freedom which, to a new-comer, is liable to cause him to say all sorts of extravagant things."

"I am glad your first impression of our state is not altogether a bad one. I am certain the more you see of it the better you will be pleased."

"I am quite sure of that, and I am going to try to see a great deal of it. At least I have so arranged my itinerary."

"Of course, you will see what there is at Houston and Galveston first, following with a slight glance at the empire."

"I am quite anxious to see the San Jacinto battle grounds, the birthplace of this great commonwealth. I presume it has been transformed into a beautiful park, with great shafts of marble and granite erected to the memory of the heroes

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who sacrificed all they had, to gain their country's independence."

"No," said Dorothy, with head slightly bowed, a tinge of color diffused upon her cheeks. "We have not, as yet, made all the improvements upon those grounds which are to be made. But in time, the birthplace of Texas will be made one of the most beautiful spots in the whole country."

"I am sure of that," said Walter, recognizing that his friend felt a delicacy, for some reason, in speaking about the present condition of that hallowed spot. "Few places in our great country may boast of having given to the world such men as Houston, Crocket, Bonham, Bowie, Travis, Fannin, Lamar, De Zavala and a host of others equally great. Certainly, your State is as rich in historic lore, of deeds of bravery and love of country, as any place on earth. I shall not fail to visit San Jacinto and the Alamo, before I leave Texas."

As the days passed by, Walter began to realize that, to see Texas as a state, he would be required to remain far longer than he had calculated. He could not prolong his visit beyond a month or, at the farthest, six weeks. He had already enjoyed two weeks of his visit, yet he had barely gotten ready to see the country. Marchand was studying conditions, however, and that was a greater source of interest to him than seeing the country, as a whole. It was upon his return from a hurried trip through the coast country between Houston, San Antonio and Brownsville, that the visitor fairly bubbled over with enthusiasm.

"My goodness, what a country you Texas people have. Certainly, the world can have no idea of the possibilities of that great scope of country, lying between Houston and Mex-

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ico, to say nothing of the country east of Houston. Oh, it must have been a hard struggle the early Texans had in obtaining their own consent to decide against imperialism and in favor of joining the Union of the American States. Their conduct in that matter, however, has meant more for human liberty, the prosperity and progress of our country than can ever be fully known. Certainly, the people of the United States owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to the early Texans, since they chose to become an American State in preference to being an empire."

"I am really glad to note your enthusiasm about our country and our people. It is really inspiring."

"Why, bless you, Dorothy, it is of itself inspiring to a fellow to come into Texas with its two hundred and seventy thousand square miles of domain. Texas is far greater in area than is the German empire or France. All of New England, if set down in Texas, would fill but one corner of the state. From El Paso to Texarkana is farther than from Chicago to New York. The German empire has sixty millions of people, and France forty millions. Texas, with her rich soils, vast deposits of coal, iron, oil, salt, sulphur, marble, granite, and precious minerals, together with her unbounded pasture ranges, inexhaustible forests of timber, unnumbered fields of rice, cotton, wheat, corn and other cereals; the largest local fruit growing belt in the world, with Italian skies and salt-laden atmosphere as it sweeps up from the Gulf, is well able to support, in luxury, a far larger population than either Germany or France. Would it surprise you had the early Texans dreamed of empire? I am surprised, though glad, that they chose the better part. Why should not Texas have, in time, a population equal in numbers to

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either Germany or France? She will have. The Gulf of Mexico will be to the western world what the Mediterranean Sea is to the old world, and Texas is and will be the center of the new world. See the great ports and harbors upon the Gulf of Mexico. See the mighty rivers, their sources near the great lakes of the North, wending their ways down through the vast trans-Mississippi country, emptying into the Gulf. See the great railroads, now rapidly transposing their systems so as to follow the trend of those rivers, that both the railroads and the rivers may aid each other in bearing to the ports of the Gulf the products of the greatest and richest producing area of territory in the world. See, then, the building of the Panama Canal, that will bring the Gulf ports closer, by thousands of miles, to the world's markets. Is it any dream to look a few years forward and witness the Mediterranean Sea of the western world drawing to it the population, commerce and facilities that shall make its adjacent territory the very center of the business activities of the western hemisphere?"

"Mr. Marchand, you astonish me with your prophesies. I did not know you had given so much thought to the future possibilities of Texas. Even if one hundredth part of your anticipations prove true, it should be enough to make our hearts glad."

"From my point of view, one great fact in bringing about the transformation which I have mentioned, will be a Pan-American College of Commerce, to be located somewhere in this part of the country. Now, Dorothy, let us discuss the question for a moment. What is your conception of what the proposed Pan-American College of Commerce should be?"

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"Really, Mr. Walter, I fear I have not given to that phase of the subject the consideration that it would appear to demand. What knowledge I have regarding it, I have obtained from the Texas commissioners, who were appointed by the legislature for the promulgation of the project, and also from the articles from time to time appearing in the leading newspapers and magazines of the country. I believe I handed you the report of the legislative committee, did I not?"

"Yes, I have that. My idea of the project, from a purely commercial standpoint, so far as the government of the countries interested are concerned, would require the following:

"First, to teach the Latin, Spanish, Portuguese and English languages, as spoken in the Americas. Second, to teach the customs, habits, wants and needs of the peoples of those countries. Third, to have on permanent exposition, the various styles of costumes and wearing apparel; samples of the various articles of commerce, including utensils, tools, instruments, implements, machinery and, in fact, everything that is of common use or that would be salable or the subject of interchange, in all the Americas."

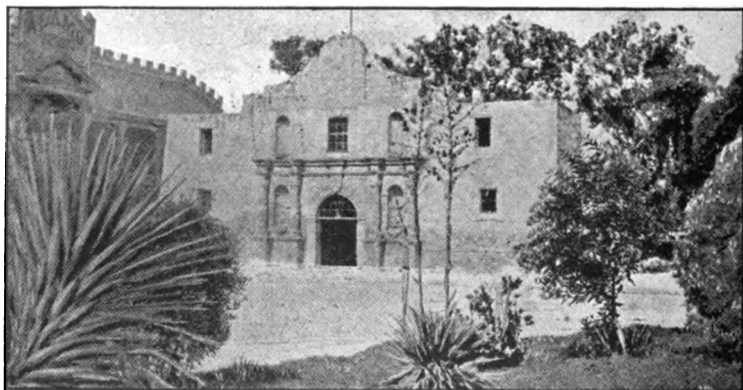
"Goodness, gracious, Mr. Walter, that would mean an exposition of mammoth proportions, would it not?"

"Yes, it would mean that, finally, but it would mean business of mammoth proportions for the countries interested. Now, that comprises the commercial feature in the strictest sense, but is not all. There should be carried along in this connection, a vast college of engineering in all its branches, such as shall be able to supply the demands for mining, electric, construction, structural, railroad, irrigation and other

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1836.



1906.

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classes of civil engineers, for the development work that is but just beginning in the western and southwestern states, Mexico, Central and South America. At this very moment there is a demand for every mining, structural and constructing engineer that may be found in our whole country. The colleges of the United States that have departments embracing this character of engineering frequently find the demand for such engineers greater than can be supplied.

"In this institution, and in this connection, perhaps, would be taken up the study of the geography, topography, mineral deposits and all natural resources of the Americas. All this would mean the unfolding and development of the Americas beyond the dreams of the most enthusiastic. To this institution would come the young men and women of the world, who were commercially inclined, to be educated and developed along lines that would fit them for governmental duties as well as all lines of commercial activity in the Americas. To this institution would also come the governments for their commercial agents, diplomats and ministers. Here, the exporters, merchants, managers and officers of the great commercial activities of our whole western hemisphere would come to select their agents, salesmen and other employes that would be most suitable and thoroughly fitted for the special lines and character of business in which and wherever their services might be required. It would also furnish teachers and ministers to all applicants therefor, until, by and by, there would be brought about common systems, common interests, common welfare, common ideas and the common good of the United States and Latin-America."

"Mr. Marchand, I am greatly enthused by your representation of the subject. It is wonderful. Why, the possibilities

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and future grandeur of such an institution are beyond one's full comprehension."

"Certainly, and what I have outlined is not all. I have merely mentioned a portion of the functions of the institution, so far as the governments of the Americas would control. There is still another feature: In the course of time, there would grow up, around this governmental institution, a series of colleges and institutes of an international character that, taken as a whole, would make it the greatest educational center the world ever knew."

"How, and by what process, would those colleges and institutes grow up around the Pan-American College of Commerce?"

"They would be the everlasting international monuments to the memory of the philanthropists of the Americas. How would this title sound? 'The Carnegie International Institute of Literature,' or 'The Rockefeller International College of Science,' or 'The Diaz International College of Arts,' and others that might be named. Once the philanthropists should be afforded such an opportunity as would be here presented to benefit the world and, at the same time, build for themselves those everlasting international monuments to their memory, they would not overlook nor let it pass."

"I had not thought of that, but it does not seem unreasonable when one thinks of it. Oh, how I would like to see Texas the home of this great system of educational enterprises."

"Why not Texas? Texas is the only natural gateway, both by sea and land, to the southern republics, and through which the interchange of commerce between the countries of the western hemisphere should pass."

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"I presume there is no doubt about the practicability and feasibility of the project, is there?"

"None whatever. I learn from your Texas commissioners that the plan or project has been indorsed by the United States government through the department of commerce. It has been indorsed by conventions of the Trans-Mississippi Congress, The American Cotton Manufacturers Association, and other national associations. It has, besides, the individual indorsement of some of the greatest men of our country, among them, several who signified their willingness to assist in the promulgation of the work by liberal donations to a fund for that purpose."

"I should think it required a vast amount of labor and the expenditure of some money to promulgate this project, it being of such mammoth proportions."

"No doubt about it. The Texas commissioners are entitled to the everlasting gratitude of our whole people for their earnest, faithful and unselfish devotion to this cause. They have expended their time, labor, and their own individual funds in its promulgation, for I understand there has been and can be no appropriation of public state funds for the purpose."

"That is correct, as I understand the situation. I agree with you that to those men is due the gratitude of the people."

"Their devotion to this cause is only another example of the heroism, patriotism and public spirit which has ever characterized the people of Texas. Great is Texas, great are her future possibilities, and still greater are her people."

"I hope we shall, some day, number you among our Texas people, Mr. Marchand."

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"If my calculations do not fail me, I am certain you shall. By the way, Dorothy, let me ask you why you have a preference for red roses instead of other colors?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because, I have observed that you always select that color in roses, and still you prefer some other color in all other flowers."

"Well, I do not know. You know we all have our peculiarities."

"I have observed that, in the many boutonnieres which you have given me, never once have you made use of any but a red rose."

"Perhaps there is some secret connected with that. If so, I should not care to disclose it."

"Then I shall discover the secret, if I can."

Another week had passed by, and Walter Marchand was more deeply interested in his observations and investigations than ever. With each passing day, the tender attachment grew stronger and stronger, until the former half intention became a strong determination to change his manner of living and, if possible, to make Dorothy Rathbone his wife. While in deep contemplation upon the subject, one day, he received two letters from home. One was from Edith and the other from Butler, as he well knew by the handwriting upon the envelopes. The letters contained glad news, yet caused a tinge of pain. Edith and Butler had improved the opportunity by Walter's absence and were engaged to be married. It was too good news to withhold from the brother, besides, they believed it would stimulate him to more fervent and decisive efforts to win Dorothy's heart and hand.

There was no doubting the fact that the good news had

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the desired effect upon Walter Marchand, for he felt that Edith would not now be left alone and disconsolate. He would now make hay, as he suggested to himself, while the sun shone, for the time of his departure for home was rapidly drawing near.

"Why has Dorothy persistently presented me with a red rose for a boutonniere? She says there may be some secret in it. I wonder what the secret can be? What can be the secret of the red rose?"

As Walter pondered and mused, he took his pencil and began scribbling upon a blank page of Butler's letter. When he awoke from his reverie, he found that he had written the following stanzas:

"I've gathered sweet flowers from many fair climes,
And the mem'ries they bear fill my heart full of glee;
But the pretty red rose is the sweetest of all,
With your sweet little fingers you plucked it my lass,
'Twas plucked by your fingers and given to me."

"What meaneth the giving of the pretty red rose,
By your dear little hand presented to me?
Forgive me, my darling, your heart, only, knows
The meaning intended by the little red rose—
It may be a message of true love from thee."

"But how shall I know, I wonder, my dear,
The meaning intended by it to convey,
When your lips are so silent, too silent, I fear,
To enlighten my mind in so modest a way,
While if speaking, might turn all the darkness 'to day."

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"Speak—you will not? Then to the red rose
I'll turn for my answer, and see? It reveals
The message intended for it to convey—
The secret you've fostered from day unto day,
The secret of love which your heart surely feels."

"Ah—treasure divine, here in my breast
I'll foster and keep it, the secret it knows,
Protected by love, with kisses caressed,
Forever revealing her secret confessed
By giving to me the pretty red rose."

"Well, that is not so very bad," said Walter. "Let me see, I shall give that a title. I will call it, 'The Secret of the Red Rose.' I think I had better hand it to Dorothy. I can open up the subject of love and possibly marriage by that means. I'll not put it off a moment longer."

A few hours later, Walter and Dorothy were together, seated upon a rustic under the shade of a live oak in the magnificent gardens of the Houston Turn Verein. Dorothy had just read Edith's letter, or that portion of it which told of her engagement to Mr. Butler.

"I am glad dear old Edith has concluded to marry, and more, that she was so fortunate as to select so good a husband as I know Mr. Butler will be," said Walter. Dorothy returned the letter with a sigh.

"Yes, I am also glad, for I always thought Edith deserved the best of husbands."

"I don't think Edith deserves any better husband than do you, Dorothy."

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"Oh, I don't know. Perhaps I shall never marry. I know I never shall unless I could marry the man I should love."

"By the way, Dorothy, I have been vain enough to make a guess about the secret of the red rose. I scribbled it on this paper. Will you read, it please?"

"Certainly."

Walter watched his friend closely and witnessed a pink tinge flashing and darting across her face and around her ears, noting also the irregular rising and falling of her bosom, all of which he well knew meant emotion, passionate emotion. As Dorothy finished reading, a crystal dropped from her lashes which she tried to hide from her friend, but was unsuccessful.

"Have I guessed it, Dorothy?"

"You had no business prying into my secret, Mr. Walter."
"Dorothy, did I not love you so honorably, nobly and intensely I should not have cared about the secret of the rose. I reckon I was vain in presuming that you cared for me, but I had long hoped for it to be so. Have I really offended you, dear?"

"No, that is, I think not."

"May I hope to win your love?"

"Why do you wish my love?"

"Because I want to make you my wife."

Dorothy quickly reached over to her right and plucked a red rose from a bush close at hand and, placing it upon the lapel of his coat, said:

"You are the best guesser I ever knew."

"Do you love me, Dorothy?"

"Yes, Walter, I have loved you since long before I ever

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saw you. I fell in love with you through the letters you wrote to Edith while she and I were in college."

"Thank God for your love. And will you be my wife?"

"If you wish it."

"I came to Texas for no other purpose than to win you, Dorothy. Having succeeded, let us walk down to the telegraph office, that we may even up with Edith and Butler by sending them the news. What say you?"

"I do not object. In fact, I shall enjoy the diversion."

"And you are mine, Dorothy," said Walter, putting his arm around her.

"Yes, after you ask sister for me," said Dorothy with a jolly laugh.

"Suppose we see your sister first and send the messages afterward."

"No, let us send the messages first, Walter," said Dorothy. her upturned ruby lips slightly puckered, as if ready to be kissed.

And they were immediately—not disappointed.



(FROM PHOTO BY J. MOODY DAWSON)

"I CAME TO TEXAS FOR NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN TO WIN YOU, DOROTHY."

THE OLD MAN'S STORY

CHAPTER XXX.

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

When Butler and Edith received the messages announcing the betrothal of Walter and Dorothy, their cup of joy was well nigh filled. The messages, however, were sent as confidential, and the only regret was that the joyful tidings could not be communicated to the father and mother.

LeBerte Marchand and the good little mother were happy in the knowledge that Edith and Butler were to become husband and wife. Their happiness would have been complete, had the additional news reached them of Walter's good fortune. They each hoped, however, that the son would bring good tidings from Texas, when he came home. With this hope and with the knowledge that Edith's happiness was now secure, the father and mother were enjoying the bliss of complete contentment and entire satisfaction.

Joe Butler kept on at his work, as usual. He was more zealous than ever, if that were possible. At all events, there was more life, more vigor, more snap in all his movements. Now he had something for which to live, something to revive the drooping spirit. Much of his attention had been given to the "Strange Old Man," of late. The old gentleman, for such he now proved himself to be, having recovered from his long spell of fever, quickly developed his powers

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and senses, evidencing the fact that he had, at some past time, been a man of refinement and education. Butler perceived that fact long before, but awaited the full recovery, as well as an opportune time for the revelation. At last it came, and having fully prepared every convenience, including a stenographer to take down all that was to be said, the proceedings were had in a business-like manner.

Joe Butler had previously talked over the matter, which was to now become a detailed statement, with the old gentleman, and of course was somewhat familiar with the facts to be related. He regarded the story as somewhat interesting, besides, he desired the statement for publication so as to thereby aid his friend in his great and only object, the discovery of and restoration to his family, if the same were possible.

"Now, my friend, we are ready for your story," said Butler to the old gentleman. "Take your time, and whenever I think you do not make a full and explicit statement of a fact, or from which I can not gather the full import, I will take the liberty of interrogating you. You may proceed."

The old gentleman leaned back in his big reclining chair, closed his eyes, and began:

"Permit me to preface my story with the statement that I realize my days upon earth are few, and that my great desire is to discover my son, if he be yet living. My story shall be short, though, perhaps, sad, as viewed from the standpoint of common humanity, for I have suffered many years of hardship and privation, during most of which time death would have been far more preferable. Yet, through it all, one ray of hope sprang eternally from my breast and, no doubt, prevented self-destruction.

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"That hope was to escape the barriers which held me, that I might find my wife and boy.

"The beginning of my story dates back to my early manhood. I was but a strip of a boy, barely out of my teens. My father had fallen in battle, fighting for the Stars and Stripes. My only brother had also sacrificed his life upon the altar of his country's cause. My mother and myself were all that were left of our family, and the loss of her husband and son so preyed upon her mind and body that she, too, soon passed to the spirit world, while I, alone, remained.

"I cared little what became of me. There was a call for volunteers, and I determined to sacrifice my life, if need be, as nothing had been left me for which to live. I was rejected by the examining board. A neighbor, who had been drafted to serve in the army, and who had considerable money and political influence, came to me and offered me one thousand dollars if I would go to war as his substitute, assuring me that he could have me accepted by the examining board. I accepted the offer, and, after all arrangements were completed and I had been accepted as the substitute, I was sent to the front. After my first battle, I began to ask myself many questions. I wondered whether I was a real soldier, fighting for my country, or whether I was a cold blooded, hired assassin. I knew, or I thought I knew, that I had killed at least one man in the first battle. I then questioned whether that one man was not worth more than one thousand dollars for which I had sold my services. The thought became revolting to my mind. My conscience, my very soul rebelled at the infamy of my position, but I was bound with fetters stronger than steel. Desert? That meant death, if caught. In my mind there was no doubt that I

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had killed one man and, perhaps, many more in the only battle in which I had thus far been engaged, and I dared not commit suicide with such stains upon my soul. I realized that I was no more nor less than a purchased assassin, hired by a human coward to go out and slay my fellowman in cold blood for a monied consideration. Yes, in cold blood, for I was not engaged in the cause on my own account, because I had been rejected. There was no relief, no hope for me. I had been entrapped, ensnared, and led into this awful business of crime by one of my father's friends. My father, mother and brother had all perished, and I, dupe and fool that I was, could not even take revenge on my own account, for I was the slave of a man who was too cowardly to fight for himself.

"This condition of affairs made my burdens almost too hard for me to bear. At last, I conceived a plan that gave me a ray of comfort, a spark of hope, a shadow of relief. I resolved that I would kill no more. I would remain at my post of duty, and I would be a soldier to the core, but I would not kill until I was enabled to do so upon my own account. I went through several battles after that, but I am certain that I was not guilty of killing anyone, as a hired assassin.

"We were in Southern Tennessee, and had been there for some time. In one of my various foraging expeditions, I saw a sweet, angelic-faced girl, or young lady that she was, whose beauty and charm so fascinated me that in a few days I began to care little whether my existence on earth were cut short or extended. The picture of that sweet face, of that lithe, slender, willowy form, remained before my vision, whether asleep or awake. I had never been in love. I did not know what love was. I did not know that I was then

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in love with this beautiful girl, but I wanted to see her, to be with her, to take her in my arms and plant a thousand kisses upon her ruby lips, and then, if need be, to die. But I had not become acquainted with her, and, knowing her to be a lady accustomed to the forms of social etiquette, there appeared little favor for my prospective suit. However, there seems to always have been, for such intense love as I bore to the young lady, a means and a method for making that love known and felt. So it was in my case, and, in time, it proved mutual and effective. We married, and there was born to us a son. It was as pretty a little babe as human eyes ever feasted upon. Then the future welfare of the mother and son became the one great object of my life. They were all that the world held dear to me, and I resolved to foster and protect them, as my best judgment and conscience should direct."

"Pardon me, my friend," interrupted Butler, "but I fear your story is not sufficiently specific as to how and when you left the ranks of the Federal army, so as to court, marry and protect the beautiful young lady. Did you finally desert?"

"I thank you for the suggestion, Mr. Butler. While I have but a short time to live on earth, I do not want my son, if he be found, to rest under the suspicion that his father had been a deserter from the army. No, I did not desert. I served out my time as a substitute, but, before the time expired, my employer had again been drafted, the draft to become effective upon the expiration of the sixty days of service which I was rendering. He besought me to renew my contract. Having become somewhat acquainted with the uncertain methods by which certain things were done in

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the army, I suggested to his agent and to the officers in charge that upon the expiration of my time I would either enlist on my own account or would accept service as a substitute. This apparently pacified both the agent and the officers, but I had, in fact, no such intentions. I learned from a comrade, who had overheard a conversation between the officer and the agent, that, if I refused to renew my contract of service as a substitute, I would be drafted into the service anyhow, and by that means enforced to act as a substitute for my father's former friend. On the day of the expiration of my service, we were marching far to the east to join in some campaign. During the march, I became lost from the main part of the detachment and drifted off up into a mountainous part of the country, all by myself. It was after twelve o'clock at night, on the day of the expiration of my contracted services, when I became lost from my detachment, although my services legally ceased at high noon on that day.

"I saw no good reason to become excited. I had lost all love for soldiering as a substitute, so I remained lost up in the hills for several days before finding my way out. When I did discover my whereabouts, I was not far from the home of my little angel. No matter then, if my soul had been on fire with the trumpet blast, the clanking saber, or the rattle of musketry, the other flame, the flame of love for my little angel, with whom I had never become acquainted, should have consumed all else.

"So, having completed my service and being entitled to an honorable discharge, but which would have been denied me through the connivance and cowardice of officer and friend, I asserted my manhood, relieved my conscience, and

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won the love of the sweetest and dearest creature it had ever been my good fortune to know. Whether my conduct shall be justified by human critics, I know not, nor care I but little, except for the fact that no man shall say of my son, that his father ever deserted his post of duty as a soldier. I hope I have made that point clear, Mr. Butler."

"Certainly, perfectly clear."

"Knowing, however, that I would be in danger from both sides of the conflicting forces, it became necessary for me to play my part in the drama, so as to save my life and preserve my freedom of action. Then, to win the love of my angel and, afterward, protect her and our child. For a while I was successful, but the time came when ill fortune overtook me. It became necessary, for the safety and comfort of wife and babe, to remove them into the Northern country, and, though it was a very dangerous undertaking upon my part, I managed very well for a time. I gave directions to the wife how to proceed through the lines to Cincinnati, Ohio, and, once there, she would find safety and the comforts of a home, with friends. I was to embrace the first opportunity to follow with our babe, so as to make sure of its safety.

"The opportunity never came. I was cut off from my retreat and was compelled to dodge from place to place, always moving southward and eastward, finally falling in the very front advance of Sherman's raiders in their famous march to the sea. There was nothing left for me but to keep in their front, advance with all possible speed, and finally jump into the ocean, if necessary. It was my only means, as I thought, of safety, and I adopted it. It resulted, however, in a fate more cruel than death. I could not divine

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the objective point of Sherman's army, so, when reaching a point near the great cypress swamps in Florida, I fell in with a stranger who was in somewhat similar straits, and we became friends. We proceeded along the western side of the swamps for a great distance until we came to what we thought was the Gulf shore, but which we observed was full of islands."

"Yes," interrupted Butler, "those are what are known as the Ten Thousand Islands."

"Well, to proceed with my story, neither of us knew when nor where we would be free from capture, and, preferring death to capture, my friend suggested that we prepare ourselves for a long respite within the Everglades which lay near at hand. I had no knowledge of the Everglades whatever, and it later proved that my comrade was little better informed upon the subject. We wandered around for days along the broken and irregular coast line until we came upon a small river or stream that had its source in the direction of the Glades. Fortunately, we were each in possession of a good rifle, pistol, knives and other equipment necessary to the hunter or other person who must subsist upon what he finds in his trackless path. From the wreckage scattered along the shore and around the many islands, we were not long in supplying ourselves with whatever we needed to rig out a respectable camping outfit. Among the flotsam, we recovered a couple of small skiffs that had been washed ashore from some wrecked boat, and these were appropriated, proving most serviceable. After cruising around for several days among the small islands, most of which seemed to be floating islands, we started up the small stream to which I have referred. To our surprise and delight, after we had

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gone but a short distance, we came upon some rapids, where clear, cool, fresh, crystal waters dashed and played over the rocks. We dragged our boats up over the rapids, and, finding it so pleasant, we camped by the bank of the crystal stream. Here we stayed for several days, resting and preparing for our further journey inward toward the unknown Everglades.

"After we had prepared ourselves and had obtained the much needed rest, we started on our cruise along an unknown stream to unknown points, and with but one object in view: security from official interference. Passing along the ever narrowing confines of the stream, occasionally we stopped to spear a fish or kill a terrapin for our next meal. We finally came out into a broad expanse, to the end of which, in every direction, the eye could not reach. It appeared to be a vast plane, level as a floor, but with no limit except the horizon, and covered with a tall, three-cornered grass, the edges of which resembled the teeth of a saw.

"Of course, there was no necessity to go farther into the sea of tall grass, so we set about to return to our old camping place and there erect permanent headquarters. Night came upon us ere we knew it, and with the night came the most terrific storm I ever witnessed. The earth shook and trembled, the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed, and, 'midst lightning flashes, we observed the rapid rise of the waters. Then seaward, we noticed a high bank of waters rolling upon us. We each clung to our frail crafts with the dread of doom upon us. We were gently raised with our skiffs above the surrounding growth of trees and bushes, picked up by the raging storm and carried, half sensible, we knew not whither. We were, of course, separated, and I

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saw my friend and comrade no more. I became stunned and unconscious, but must have held on to my little boat with a death grip, for, when consciousness returned, I found myself still in the boat, but landed high and dry upon an island far out in the dreaded Everglades, with tall grass surrounding me.

“Upon examination of my effects, all were intact and safely preserved, but there I was, God only knew how far from the aid of human hands, death by starvation staring me in the face. I had not long to wait, however, until I was awakened to the realization of the fact that I was not the sole inhabitant of the island. Almost before I could realize the situation, I was surrounded by a dozen or more barbarous savages. They were half clad with the skins of animals, and carried wicked looking clubs and spears. They circled around and around my little craft, chanting and going through many queer and, to me, wholly unintelligible orgies, constantly repeating the words, ‘Hat-ka-tee, es-tee, mic-co-orlee a-pato-ya,’ which, I afterwards learned, meant ‘white man chief.’

“Having ridden in my chariot upon the winds, and landed where the foot of white man had never trod, the ignorant and childlike aborigines believed me to have been the representative of the Great Spirit, and the demonstrations by them made upon discovering me were demonstrations of love and obedience to my wishes, whatever the same might be. I did not, at first, appreciate the real situation, believing that I was to be immediately devoured. I therefore picked up my rifle and began looking for the big chief of the band, thinking I would settle accounts with him first. At the sight of my rifle, the whole band fell upon their knees

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and bowed their heads unto the ground, still chanting their plaintive, though unmelodious, song. Then I began to realize the situation. I felt my power and influence over my new-found but strange and hideous companions. I arose to my full height and, with uplifted hands, proclaimed peace unto them. They evidently caught the meaning, for they began a more lively circle dance, while an expression of pleasure and joy spread over their faces. Then came forth from a cluster of bushes near at hand a tall, gaunt figure, clothed in a full, long robe of white otter skins, bearing a large pipe or calumet. Approaching to within a few feet of my boat, he took a long draw at the calumet and, pointing the stem upward, raised it arm-length three times. Then facing the east, puffed some smoke upward from his mouth. Turning to the westward, he repeated the performance. He then handed me the calumet and, nodding, said, 'Eh-cho-che,' meaning to smoke. Knowing something of the customs of the American Indians, and preferring peace to war under the circumstances, I went through the same performance as had done the big white prophet, whereupon I returned the pipe and extended my open hand, which he clasped with his own, the other members of the band continuing their dancing and incantations.

"But I fear my story grows wearisome," said the old gentleman.

"Not at all," replied Butler. "Upon the contrary, I fear you will finish all too soon. It is absorbingly interesting to me, and, since the world knows so little of the Everglades of Florida, your story partakes of a historical interest, which will, no doubt, be valuable on that account, if for no other reason."

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"In a short time the local inhabitants of the island and myself became good friends. I recognized the importance of my power over them, superinduced by their belief that I partook of the nature of a man-god, and I constantly puzzled my brain to maintain and hold my exalted position, which I successfully did to the end.

"For the benefit of history and science, I will state that the great tract of territory known as the Everglades is mostly covered by fresh, limpid water, rising from fissures in the rock which overlay the vast area. In these waters abound fine specimen of fish of a variety known as perch, or bass, and grow to a large size. There are also to be found otter, beaver and other furred animals. Terrapin and frogs of enormous size are plentiful. Near our island were to be found unlimited quantites of freshwater oysters, or mussels, a very palatable food when baked or boiled within the shell. These mussels in large numbers contain most valuable pearls. The collection which I brought out from the place represents the labor of many years in collecting. The natives use the pearls for beads and also as a coin of exchange for commodities, which practice is of no importance to them, as all the property and possessions upon the island belong to the tribe in common. I was king and ruler, hence I was permitted to have whatever I wanted, and my will was the law.

"In all the years I lived upon this island never a day passed, except one day out of seven, that my effort was not continued to find a way out from the Glades. Year in and year out the work was kept up, but our progress against the terrible saw grass was almost unnoticable. At last I gave up in despair, and for several years I contented myself to eat and sleep, and for recreation would hunt otter and catch

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fish. Of course, we raised many vegetables, corn and coffee, upon our desolate holdings, the island containing about one hundred acres, covered with a rich, alluvial soil.

"Finally, a drouth came that appeared to dry up the very fountains of the earth. The water disappeared from the great flats by degrees, until they seemed as dry as a bone. A strong wind began raging from the northeast, giving the appearance of a change of weather. My chance for escape had come. I went to the west side of the island and set fire to the dried saw grass. What a blazing, seething, boiling hell it made. The first flash of flame leaped and bounded over the tall grass hundreds of feet a second, as if it were covered with powder. Then it was followed by the roaring, crackling, burning of the stalks that were as so many splinters of fat pine. On and on it swept, the heavens filling with billows of blackness, against which shone the bright, lapping, curling flames of fire which shot high into the air, resembling the forked tongues of monster serpents. On and on it went toward the Gulf, and I comforted myself with the thought that this, my passageway to freedom, was certainly more spectacular, if less harmful, than was Sherman's march to the sea, which had driven me to this accursed spot.

"That night the rain came, but gently. It was the forerunner, however, of a storm that followed a few days later. Having made due preparations for my departure, the next morning I selected two of the strongest young braves and bade them accompany me, promising to show them the wonders of 'Indian Heaven,' leaving the impression upon the others that we would return at night, or within two suns.

"Taking such tools, provisions and other things as might

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possibly be needed, secretly including my stock of pearls, we set out on foot, proceeding in the direction and course followed by the fire. By nightfall we found ourselves upon the source of a small stream, which I thought was the same stream or river by which I had originally entered the Glades. The next morning, being footsore and tired, I sent my companions on ahead to some timber, hoping to find a tree sufficiently large of which to make a dugout, that I might raft down the little stream. After a long absence, they returned and informed me that they had found what was wanted.

"We proceeded along the narrow channel until nearly noon, when the stream became wider and deeper, and the current swifter. We came upon a couple of skiffs, and, stopping, wondered to whom they could belong. In them there were provisions that gave evidence of recent ownership. We went out over the burned surface, looking for some sign, when, suddenly, we beheld the charred remains of three human bodies, all lying with head toward the stream, evidencing the fact that they had been caught by the cruel flames ere they found safety in their boats. We appropriated their boats and effects and began drifting with the current, I in one boat, and my two companions in the other. So we drifted during the day and the greater portion of the night, when we were brought face to face with a sweeping gale from the northeast, which rapidly drove our frail crafts out into what appeared to be a broad expanse of water, as I could observe from the lightning flashes. I realized that we were then in the Gulf of Mexico, and in the presence of a certain death. I grabbed the leathern bag of pearls and strapped it to my body, tying it with thongs

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so as to make it safe. I already had a leathern belt filled with the more precious pearls strapped around my body, under my clothing. In the storm our boats became separated, and what became of my companion braves I never knew. On and on swept the storm at mighty speed, as I judged in passing the many islands. I lashed myself to the skiff, for I knew that I must lose consciousness, and in this manner my life might be saved. If not, perhaps the pearls might not be lost to the world forever.

"Then all became a blank to me, until I was brought to life and consciousness by some men releasing me from my moorings. It was the men from the tramp steamer who rescued me and brought me here. With the remainder of my story you are familiar. You are the first person, except those who rescued me from a watery grave, who had the goodness of heart to take an interest in my life, and I can never sufficiently repay you for all your goodness to me. Pardon me, I am growing faint."

"There, now, my friend, you must rest a bit. I fear you have overtaxed your strength," said Butler. The stenographer was dismissed with instructions to transcribe his notes and to give information concerning the same to no one.

When the old gentleman had been made comfortable, Butler also departed, leaving his friend alone to dream over again and again the sweets of a life that should have been his but for cruel misfortune.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

A FRUITLESS MISSION.

When the story of the strange old man had been reduced to a neatly typewritten form, Butler conferred with LeBerte Marchand, as had been agreed, and together the two men read it over hurriedly.

"Well, Butler," said Marchand, "I thank you for the courtesy thus shown me in this matter. I did not know but that I might possibly have a special interest in the history of this old man, and of which I may later speak to you. Had this man been a soldier in the Southern army, it would have been of much more interest to me, and I am glad it has turned out as it has. However, if you have no particular use for this paper, I should like to retain it."

"Certainly, Mr. Marchand, it is but a copy; I have the original. The old gentleman spoke about making his will. I suppose you do not care to do that, do you?"

"No, you may as well call up Walton, who will attend to the matter. I shall not go to my office for a few days, as I am not well, neither are my services required there."

"Certainly; I will have the matter attended to, however, so that you need not bother about it. I presume Walter will be coming home in a few days now?"

"Yes, he so wrote us, and he further intimated that he

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would probably make his future home in Texas. I hope he and Dorothy have taken kindly to each other."

"I think they have, Mr. Marchand. Of course, I am not certain."

"Well, it is to be hoped they have."

When, during the day, Marchand sat on the gallery of the fine old home, enjoying the balmy breezes, the typewritten statement in his hand, he fell asleep, the paper falling to the floor. By and by the wind carried it off the gallery and around the corner of the house, where it was picked up by one of the servants and handed to Edith, who began reading it. Ere she had read a great portion of it, the expression of her countenance indicated much interest, then excitement, and finally great trepidation. She ran to her mother, who was in the parlor, engaged with some household duty, saying:

"Oh, mother, the servants found this paper in the grounds and handed it to me. I have read part of it, and it sounds so much like the story you once told me about your first husband that I became fearful. Please read it. There is no telling what great calamity might yet happen."

The mother began reading the statement hastily, the color rising and falling upon her face, indicating excitement, until at last the poor woman gave a scream of fright and fell to the floor in a swoon. The house was in an uproar within a short time, the servants hurrying about to bring the husband to the scene. Marchand saw the paper, still clutched in the hand of the unconscious wife, and he took possession of it, saying to Edith:

"How did that paper fall into her hands?"

"I handed it to her to read, for I feared—"

"Tut, tut, silence! How came you in possession of it?"

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"One of the servants found it out in the grounds and brought it to me."

"It must have blown out of my hand while I slept in my chair. There is no cause for fright; there is no necessity for excitement. Let us quiet your mother's fears and give her assurances that all is well."

Mrs. Marchand was tenderly laid upon a couch, restoratives applied, and after a few moments she regained consciousness, but remained weak and nervous from the effects of the shock and fright.

"Do not be alarmed, mother," said Edith, "for father declares that the paper was one which he himself had, and it dropped from his hands when he fell asleep out on the gallery. There, now, rest easy, my good mother, you have no cause for fear whatever."

"How did your father come into the possession of that paper?"

"I do not know, I am sure, but there is nothing strange or startling about it, since I come to think of it. I've read a hundred stories like that in the papers. It does not fit your case, mother."

"Indeed, child, the part of it relating to my passing through the lines to Cincinnati is identical with my case."

"But, mother, there were thousands of such cases. I am told that a great many Southern ladies were sent to the North during the war for their own protection and comfort, and certainly there must be many cases with exactly similar incidents and facts. You must not worry, mother dear. Father bids you rest easy, and you know he would not so advise you if there were any danger. Now, that is a good mother, and after you have some sleep and rest, we will

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take a drive. It is such a lovely day. I'll close the door, mother, so you shall not be disturbed."

Edith passed on out upon the gallery, where her father was sitting, and found him reading over again the typewritten statement.

"There is nothing in this story to indicate that John Hayes was the former husband of your mother. We must quiet her and have her forget that she ever had any other husband but myself."

"I am glad of your assurances, father, and I will do all that I can to make her forget it all."

When Butler left the work at his office to call upon John Hayes, he began pondering over the old man's story, and recollected that it lacked detail with relation to the disposition made of the child at the time the wife was sent North to Cincinnati by the young husband. It would prove a much easier task to trace the whereabouts of the son, were fuller details given as to what disposition the father made of the babe, and, if it were possible, the same must be procured.

"Now, Mr. Hayes, before we proceed with our other matters of business, I would like you to give me a clear statement of your movements, and what disposition you made of your babe, at the time you sent your wife through the lines to the North. You say you were to follow her, bringing the babe, at the first opportunity?"

"Let me think," said the old man, drawing his hand across his brow. "Yes, I was to follow by a more westerly route, so as to avoid the armies. Well, the opportunity for a successful escape never came. My plans failed, for I was forced to seek seclusion. When I reached Memphis, I was compelled to leave my babe with an old negro woman in whom I felt

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I could place implicit confidence. I gave her plenty of money and instructed her fully how and where to reach the mother of the child, knowing that when the old colored woman found her, the mother would understand the situation. Then I quickly sought safety by starting for my retreat and hiding place back in the hills, to await a more favorable opportunity for my escape through the lines.

"But, as I said before, I was cut off, and then followed my enforced retreat to the dismal swamps. Of course, I have never seen nor heard of either my wife or child since that sad day."

"You left your son with an old negro woman in the City of Memphis, you say?"

"Yes, I could do nothing else. Of course, I was dressed in a Southern soldier's uniform, and might have left the child with a white family, but I wanted the babe carried North to its mother, so I procured the services of an old negro woman."

"What was the old darky's name?"

"I cannot recollect. In memory I can see the little old cabin where she lived, but her name is lost to mind. If I could go upon the spot, I think it would all return to my mind."

"That you shall do, just as soon as we can arrange your affairs. What was your name under which you married?"

"I am not positive, but I think it was Wilkoma Olcott. Of course, that was not my true name, for I was fearful of the officers of the army discovering me, so I employed that name."

"Do you remember the name of your son?"

"Oh, yes, I shall never forget it. My wife's Christian

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name was Norma, and my Christian name being Wilkoma, we appropriated a part of each name, giving to our son the name of Norkoma. We did that because, our respective families being wiped out by the cruel war, we had no one for whom our son could be a namesake, so we appropriated part of our own names."

"That was rather a novel idea," said Butler.

"Yes; the mother of invention, they say, is necessity, and this was a case of necessity. I request of you, Mr. Butler, to not make known the facts of my story until we find my wife and son, or until I am dead and passed away. Will you do me that favor?"

"I will, Mr. Hayes. However, in making your last will and testament, you will be required to employ both your own name, Olcott, and your other name, Hayes, in order to make same fully understood. Your affidavit to the statement, or life story, may be attached to the will, to be read and made public, in case of your death. I have arranged for Mr. Walton, partner of Mr. Walter Marchand, to come and write your will this afternoon. I will caution him about secrecy in the matter, and you should be perfectly frank in matters with him. I have arranged, as you suggested, to have those pearls transformed into money, and our agent has gone to New York to consult about the same. He will return tomorrow. If anything occurs that you need me, send for me. I will see you this evening."

"Before we get matters all closed, I want to pay both you and my lawyers for the great services you have rendered me. I wish you would please ascertain and let me know the amount."

"I have ascertained from the Marchands, and they re-

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fuse to render a bill, saying that their services were for my account, and they will accept nothing, as a fee. For myself, I have made no charge for my services; all expenses were borne by funds received from the sale of pearls."

"That will never do. Both you and the Marchands must accept a reward and compensation."

"We will discuss the matter later. Walton will be here soon to write your will, so I must let you rest a bit. Good day."

A few days later, the once strange old man, who could neither speak nor understand a word of his native tongue and who had spent the better part of his life in the undiscovered portion of the Everglades of Florida, was ready to start out in search of his wife and son. He would first go to Memphis, thence to Cincinnati, on his hopeful mission. Before going, however, he reduced his fortune of pearls to legal tender of the realm, and had made, constituted and appointed Joe Butler his agent and attorney in fact, with full power to manage and control the same. He also carried with him letters of instruction, so that in case of sickness or accident, Butler should be notified of the fact without delay.

Some days afterward, Butler received a letter from the old gentleman, dated at Memphis, stating that he had located the place where the old negro woman lived at the time he parted with his child, and that her name was Aunt Dinah, but her other name he could not recollect. One of her former neighbors is still living, an old negro man, and he had said that several years after the war Aunt Dinah went back to Alabama, and he thought she took the boy with her. The old negro remembered Aunt Dinah, but didn't

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recollect her full name. He also said that he had heard that she had gone from Alabama to live in New Orleans.

"Now that is strange," said Butler to himself. "It is just barely possible that my old black mammy knows something about the old negro woman. I'll ask her."

When opportunity presented, Butler incidentally asked the old colored woman if she had ever lived in Memphis.

"Did I evah live in Memphis? I guess I did. Yes, sah, I did dat verah thing."

"When did you live there, Auntie?"

"I lived dar durin' de wah, an' a good smart while aftah de wah. Why yo' ax me?"

"Never mind why I ask you, Auntie. I think you are liable to come into a fortune, perhaps."

"What yo' say? Umph, from dat little white boy, what I done raised?"

"May be so. Where did you get the little white boy, Auntie?"

"White man done fling him to me, and tole me to take him up North."

"How big was the boy when you got him?"

"Jes a tee-ny we-ny baby. I had to raise him on a bottle. Dat's what I had."

"Do you remember anything about the baby that was peculiar, or by which he might be identified when he grew up to be a man?"

"Yes sah, yes sah, Marse Joe, I 'member a heap. Say, Marse Joe, what's yo' axin' me all dem questions about that li'l baby boy fo? I jes don't cac'rlate I'se gwine ter git in trouble, is I?"

"Not at all; not if you tell me all about it. If you tell

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me all about it, I will see that you are taken good care of as long as you live. What makes you fear trouble?"

"Because, yo' see, I done sold the li'l boy to a rich white man, den I left de place and kem to my old marse's over in Alabamy. Dat was when yo' was a li'l boy yo'sef."

"Well, what do you remember about the baby?"

"Dat babe done had a li'l gold locket with his mother's picture in it, and her name was on de locket."

"What was the name?"

"I jes don't rec'lect, but I rec'lects de boy's name. It was 'Koma. Yes, dat's it, it was 'Koma."

"Do you mean Norkoma?"

"Yessah, yessah, Marse Joe, dat's what it was. How yo' knows dat name?"

"Oh, well, I found it out. But say, what became of the man who gave the baby to you?"

"Don't know, sah. He jes axed me if I'd tek dat baby and carry it up North to some place or other, I can't rec'lect; but he writ out a lot o' stuff and said it was the d'rections. I done los' de papah, and den I couldn't tek de baby no whah, so I jes stayed whah I wuz. I nevah did see de man any mo'. A long time aftah dat, a fine, rich white man kem along and sed he wuz de uncle ob dat chile, and he gin me twenty dollahs fo' de keepin', so I let him tek de baby, de locket an' de whole kerpoodle. Dat's all I knows 'bout it."

"Well, that is enough for my purposes. Are you sure the boy was called Norkoma?"

"I sho' is. Dat's 'xactly what it was."

"Now, Auntie, keep still about this, and say nothing until I ask you more about it."

A FRUITLESS MISSION

"Dis ole niggah ain't no fool, Marse Joe. Don't reckon I done kep' still 'bout dis for all dese yers, and spit my stummick out o' my mouf now, does yo'?"

"I guess you'll do all right, Auntie."

"Say, Marse Joe, I is in pow'ful bad need o' some snuff. Yo' ain't got a quatah loose change, has yo'?"

"Certainly, Auntie, I always have some change for you."

"Bless yo', Marse Joe, bless yo'. Ain't no use talkin', de ole marse and de ole marse's son sho' knows how to treat a po' ole niggah bettah dan dese new grown up folka. Dat's what dey do."

Butler was now somewhat excited, for he believed, in fact, he knew, that old Aunt Dinah was the same old Aunt Dinah who had taken care of his friend's son.

"But what became of the son?" mused Butler. "If John Hayes should be apprised of the fact that the old negress had not even attempted to carry the babe to its mother, as he had directed, it would only become a source of more acute anxiety, and it would be best, perhaps, to not inform him of that fact. Not for the present, at least."

Butler could not disclose any further facts to LeBerte Marchand, for he had promised Hayes he would keep the secret until the mother and son were discovered, or until he, Hayes, were dead. He would be in duty bound to keep his word of honor. There was no possibility of Marchand's knowing anything about this man, for he was a Federal soldier.

"Marchand might have known something if the man had been a Confederate soldier," mused Butler. "So Marchand said, and that settled the question. Who could have been the rich white man that said he was the uncle of Norkoma?"

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That is a question. He might have been any one of a million people—yes, or more. Perhaps he was some Southern man who had lost his family in the cruel war. Seeing the child had no home except with the negress, he took the boy and adopted him. One might as well hunt for a needle in a hay stack as to hope to find Norkoma in such event. Ah, it will, I fear, prove a fruitless task. But the poor old man may as well devote the balance of his days to the work of love. He will be the better content if he never know the facts with which I have this day become acquainted. Knowing the facts, he would soon realize the utter fruitlessness of his task, and end his days in a sorrow that is without compensation or hope. No, I'll not inform him, for, with hope springing constantly within his breast, it will be a pleasant task for him, even unto the day of his death."

Butler had now reached his office, and the subject was soon driven from his mind by the many duties and cares that devolved upon him there. He was too happy in the knowledge that Edith Marchand was soon to become his wife. He had lived in silent hope for a long time, struggling and toiling, but at last the great prize was to be his. Now, he had good cause to dream of a happy fireside and loved ones about him. He had once known such happiness, but for a short duration only. Now, he knew better how to employ all the means possible to make home the husband's and wife's haven of true and earthly happiness. His sorrows had mellowed his nature. They had tempered his ambitions, they had been as a holy incense burning upon the altars of his soul. Well, the happy day was not far off, and others there were, as anxious, perhaps, for the consummation of the matter as was Butler.

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While Butler was busily engaged at his desk, he was called up by 'phone, and, responding, was surprised no little to hear a sweet, silvery voice. It was Edith. After the usual formalities, she said:

"Mr. Butler, father requests that you make no mention of the strange story of John Hayes. He gives no reasons, but desires that you do not make it public as yet. Not until he has a conference."

"Why do you ask, Edith? You seem anxious?"

"Well, it is father's wish, and he is feeling rather poorly, so if you will grant it I shall feel ever so grateful to you."

"You dear little angel, I would be tempted to close down the plant and never print another paper, if you so requested."

"Oh, my, what a fib! You are becoming a little extravagant, are you not?"

"Well, my dear, when you are mine, I'll be the richest man in all the world. I can afford to be extravagant, can't I?"

"Extravagance is an evil, you know. And over a telephone it is sometimes more than that."

"Thank you, Edith, for the suggestion. Telephones are a convenience, of course, but a perplexity at times, and I think I could do better in person. I shall call at 'The Cedars' this evening, if I may."

"I shall be delighted, I am sure."

During the afternoon, Butler received another letter from Wilkoma Olcott, or John Hayes, by which name he was more familiarly known to his friends in New Orleans. The letter bore the news that Olcott had been unable to find further trace of old Aunt Dinah and his son, and, that owing to an over-tax upon his nerves and perhaps too much activity, he was fearful of a recurrence of fever. He had taken the pre-

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caution to go to the hospital "Mercedes," that he might have good care and attention.

Immediately upon reading the letter, Butler telegraphed the hospital as follows:

"Please afford patient Olcott every facility and the best medical attention possible to be had in your city. Spare no expense; cost is not to be considered. Draw on me for necessary funds. Report condition of patient daily.

"JOE BUTLER."

A SUDDEN DEATH

CHAPTER XXXII.

A SUDDEN DEATH.

When Mrs. Marchand had fully recovered from the effects of her fright caused by the reading of the typewritten statement, she began thinking more calmly over the facts as therein related. She felt quite certain that the person who related the strange story was no other than her former husband. The poor woman was at a loss to know just what to do or where to turn for counsel and advice. True, she had told Mr. Marchand all that she knew about the unhappy incidents of her early life. On that score she had no cause for regret, for she had done all that an honest, honorable woman could have done. Marchand could certainly not lay any blame to her account, yet the poor woman was greatly disturbed in mind. She feared the discovery might in some way bring odium upon her husband, or upon Edith and Walter, for which the public would censure her. Certainly, there should be some one in whom she must confide, for she could no longer contain her emotions, her fears, unobserved by her family. They surely must become aware of the strain upon her. She had written Walter to come home at once, it is true, without stating reasons. But he might not arrive in time to be of service as an adviser.

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She had always confided in Edith, but now she erroneously felt that Edith was disinclined to be as lovingly loyal as in former times. Of course, in that she did the daughter an injustice. At last she confided in her husband. She assured him of the cause of her fears, and of her belief that her fears were well founded.

No argument of the husband could sway her from her steadfast belief. The story of the incident compared with the facts of her former life, and there could be no two incidents exactly alike.

"Well," said the husband, somewhat irritated, "if such be true, even then there is no need of alarm. How can you be discovered, here in my home, and identified as the former Mrs. Norma Olcott?"

"You overlook the fact that the notice of our marriage was published in all the papers at the time."

"Yes, I had not thought of that. But it is barely possible that the files of old newspapers should be resorted to in the search for you. Besides, there may have been a dozen others bearing the name of Norma Olcott. I remember that the papers gave your name as Norma, leaving the impression that you were a maiden. No one would ever discover you here, unless, through your own fears or conduct, you lead to that result. You are not to blame if your first husband is not dead. Your conduct in the matter is beyond reproach. It was honorable, honest and upright. I absolve you from even the thought of wrong-doing. What more could you wish?"

"Oh, husband, you don't know how your manly words have given relief to my troubled soul. I feared that Edith and

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Walter might not feel as kindly toward me since this suspicion has arisen."

"Dear wife, your mind has been filled with foolish fears. Edith and Walter love you as always, and they will stand as your firm defenders against the world, the flesh and the devil."

"You have made me so happy, dear husband. I am sorry I did not come to you at the start. I should have done so. But will there be any publication given to this story?"

"I think not. It is all in Butler's hands. He will not permit its publication if I request him to suppress it."

"Oh, please do so at once, for I do not want it. It will be as a nightmare to me."

"It shall be so, my dear."

With the last remark, Marchand directed Edith to request Butler to suppress the story, which was accordingly done, as indicated in the previous chapter.

Walter Marchand was expected home on the morning train, but, having changed his plan, did not arrive until the evening. He was anxious to again greet his family, and to impart the good news to his father and mother, so he went from the depot direct to "The Cedars," taking along Butler, who had gone to meet him. It was a great pleasure to be home again. Walter was thrilled with delight, with a hundred emotions, as he sat in the rapidly-moving carriage beside his friend, the incandescents in the show windows of the great stores making the streets as light as the day.

"Say, old fellow, permit me to congratulate you again upon your good fortune in winning sister Edith. I am now con-

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vinced that little sister was in love with you all the time. Gumps that we were, we should have known it long ago."

"No man is happier than am I, certainly," said Butler. "I also congratulate you upon your good fortune in winning Dorothy. I can tell you now that I was aware that she loved you all the while."

"Here we are at the gates, and bless me, there stands sweet little Edith in the door, watching for us. Bless the dear girl."

The greeting of brother and sister upon the threshold of the old home was, indeed, a tender and affectionate greeting. It was more tender and affectionate than is usually observed between brother and sister, and while pleasant to witness, Butler felt a slight tinge of pain or of sadness, perhaps. Just why he felt so, he did not know. It was but momentary, however, for as Walter rushed on into the house to greet the father and mother, Edith turned to her betrothed, and, taking his hand in both her own, pressed it affectionately to her cheek, and, through her tears of joy, whispered, "my love."

That was recompense to Butler for his momentary pang. He pressed his lips upon the beautiful brow of his beloved, and answered, "my darling." After the informal and joyous greeting of Walter and his parents, he informed them that he had some especially good news, which, he felt sure, would please them.

"Don't keep poor mama and papa in suspense, Walter. It is really mean in you," said Edith.

"Well, I have fallen a victim to Miss Rathbone's charms, and we are to become husband and wife," said Walter.

"Hurrah for you!" said the father. I knew that little

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sprite would bring you to your sense of the duty you owe to yourself and your country. Walter, let me congratulate both you and Dorothy."

"And have I not my good mother's congratulations, also?" said Walter, as he gently stroked Mrs. Marchand's hair and kissed her forehead.

"Yes, my son, you have my congratulations, for I think Dorothy will prove all and more than you expect of her. It is always a little hard, however, for a mother to part from her children, even knowing it to be for the best."

"We will not part from each other, mother dear. If I shall conclude to live in Texas, you can come and visit with us, you know. But we may live right here, where we can be together, an unbroken, happy family. Won't that be nice?"

"I hope it may be so, my son. When is to be the consummation of your plans?"

"Just so soon as my term of office as Mayor of this city expires. That will be three or four months from now."

"I don't see what your office has to do with it, Walter," said the father. "I always feel that when one fully makes up his mind on the question of marriage, he should end the suspense as quickly as possible."

"Oh, it will be pleasant to live in anticipation. Besides, I want to work out a plan by which my successor in office shall carry out the designs and projects of the present administration. You see, we have inaugurated many new ideas for the betterment of our city, and we do not want them to fall into the hands of persons who cannot be trusted to carry them out. So I shall have plenty to do in laying the ground

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work for a successful campaign and the future consummation of the work already begun."

"Who will likely be your successor, brother?" asked Edith.

"Your husband, my dear."

"What? Mr. Butler will be your successor, and he never told me of it?" surprisedly suggested Edith.

"I knew nothing of it, Miss Edith. This is the first intimation I have had of that important fact," answered Butler.

"Butler, you are one man that we can certainly depend upon to hold the city government at the present water mark of prosperity and good standing. I shall confer with my colleagues tomorrow, and I am certain you will be unanimously agreed upon. You have nothing to do but accept the situation as you will find it."

"Have I no choice in the matter, whatever, Walter?"

"None whatever. You will have been married three or four months, settled down to regular routine, the sharp edge of newly married life worn off, and you will be in excellent trim for the work before you. Besides, you can then learn by actual experience about that snake story; ha, ha, ha!"

"Walter, you are a brick. It certainly did you good to take that Texas trip. But I shall not promise you that your plans will prove altogether harmonious. I am not the only one to be consulted in the matter."

"Oh, I see. Well, darling sister, will you consent to your husband becoming my successor?"

"I shall first want to know some of the great plans you have in store for the city."

"Well, we want sidewalks, and better streets, and——"

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"That is enough. If you agree that the city shall have good sidewalks, you have my consent."

"All right, that is settled, and, Joe Butler, you are to be the Mayor, because your wife says you may."

"Before we proceed farther, Walter, let me ask if the people are going to have anything to say about it? You remember when a committee waited on you to notify you that you were to be the next Mayor, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. But I am going on the presumption that the people will nominate and elect you. I take it that the people indorse my administration, and that they will refuse to indorse any man who does not agree to carry out the ideas, reforms and projected improvements of this administration. If that be true, and you agree to do these things, I can see nothing in the way to bar your progress. You have, besides, two of the best newspapers in the city, which will prove a sure medium by which you can reach the people. Another thing is, you are somewhat of a politician, and are possessed of an encyclopedia of political knowledge, as compared with my primer."

"There is no getting around your argument, Walter, so long as there is none to take the negative side of the question. But how about the sidewalk question? Many people are already objecting and finding fault. They don't like the idea of being compelled to build sidewalks."

"That is to be expected. I know what class of people are howling about it. It is the speculator, the fellow who buys up cheap property, lets it lie unimproved, or if improved, rents it, awaiting for his neighbors to improve the neighborhood and thereby make his property more valuable. The man who rents has a vote, the same as the speculator who rents

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him the house. The home-owner next door, who takes some pride in improving and beautifying his home, has a vote the same as the speculator. The poor devil who has no home at all, and who lives in a bad tenement house just beyond, walks along the street in mud and water where there ought to be a sidewalk, and he has a vote just the same as the speculator. From a voting standpoint, the sidewalk has ten votes to one as opposed to it. But I was not thinking of the matter from a politician's viewpoint. I was looking at it in the interest of the whole city. What a shame it is that right in the very heart of the business portion of our city such miserable sidewalks are to be found. I have seen women and children compelled to walk out into the street, at places, to avoid almost impassable sidewalks in front of high priced property; property, too, which the owner refuses to sell at a reasonable price, and just as unreasonably refuses to build a decent sidewalk in front of it. It is this class of people who are a curse to a city. They do more to prevent a city's growth, prosperity, and decent appearance than any other class of citizens. I shall push the sidewalk law to the limit while I am Mayor, and will oppose the election of any and all persons for city officials who do not openly avow their determination to carry this work bravely on until we have something respectable in the way of sidewalks throughout the whole city."

"Well said, my brother," exclaimed Edith, clapping her hands with delight. "I do hope we shall finally have more and better sidewalks, especially in the business part of town."

LeBerte Marchand had previously gone into the library, and, now returning, informed Mr. Butler that a telegram of importance had been delivered at his office, but, upon inquiry

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over the 'phone, he had directed that it be sent to "The Cedars."

"I thank you very much, Mr. Marchand," replied Butler.

In a few moments the telegram arrived, which Butler put in his pocket, unread.

"Why don't you read the message, Joe? It may be important. No, you need not go to the library to read it; you are at home here, so you may as well begin to act at home," declared Walter, teasingly.

"Ladies, I beg your pardon, and at the same time I will read." * * *

"What, bad news?" asked Walter, as Butler paled and looked surprised.

"Read," said Butler, as he handed the message to Walter.

The message read as follows:

"Memphis, Tenn. 190....

"Joe Butler. N. O.

"Your friend Wilkoma Olcott died this evening at 6 o'clock. Await your instructions.

"DR. W. H. TAYLOR."

As Walter read the letter aloud, so that all present heard, there was an audible whisper of, "Thank God," and it was observed that the mother's head was sinking forward, a pallor spreading over her face. The telegram fell to the floor as Walter stood gazing in wonderment at his mother, while Edith and the father went quickly to the rescue. With the application of restoratives and proper treatment, the little woman was soon relieved of her momentary affliction, although Edith remained by her side, the mother having been at first carried to her room.

Walter and Butler were soon assured by the father that the

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mother had only a slight heart weakness, and she would be entirely well by the following morning.

"What instructions do you suggest that I send to Dr. Taylor? Shall the body be interred at Memphis, or shall it be brought here?" asked Butler, directing his question to LeBerte Marchand.

"I presume there is no necessity of a reply tonight, is there? The body will be embalmed, no doubt," replied Marchand.

"Very well, I shall await your suggestions, in the morning. When Walter comes down town he can make known your wishes. I shall now return to the office as I have neglected some important business matters. Please say good night for me to Edith and her mother. I shall not disturb them."

"In the morning, then," said LeBerte Marchand, as he accompanied Butler to the door in person.

"Yes, in the morning will do. Good night."

"Good night."

"Now, my son, you are aware of the fact that Mrs. Marchand's first husband disappeared during the war, and that he was never heard of by her afterward. She has been fearful, lately, that our friend, the old man John Hayes, as we called him, was her said former husband. In fact, I had, but yesterday, concluded that her fears were well founded, and the telegram just received has convinced me of the truth of that fact. It said Wilkoma Olcott had died. That was the name of Mrs. Marchand's first husband. Now you are in possession of the facts. What shall be done with the body?"

"It should be interred at Memphis, where it now is, so as to create as little disturbance as possible, I should judge.

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Of course, no one here knows?"

"No, and I trust the facts will not be known to any but our immediate family. Of course, Butler will know, sooner or later, but he will become a member of our family in a few days, so it will be safe with him."

"I am mighty glad it is all ended. Mother will surely feel a great relief now. She never need fear more."

"In a few moments I shall 'phone to Butler to direct that the interment take place at Memphis, temporarily, but that the body be well embalmed, so that it may be removed later, possibly."

"Very well, father, that will save me time in the morning, as I shall be very busy. I will now go in and console mother, poor soul."

"Yes, do that, Walter, for heaven only knows what the poor woman has suffered in all these years. Draw her mind away from the thought as quickly as possible, so that she may be restful during the night."

After half an hour of comforting assurances from Walter and Edith, the little mother became drowsy and fell asleep, when brother and sister turned the light low and tip-toed out of the room, drawing the door to, but not closing it. When the brother and sister reached the library, they ensconced themselves in a cozy corner and held a conference, such as only Edith and Walter could hold. They each realized that the time for the parting of their ways had come, and they were prepared for it. It was fortunate, however, so they made themselves believe, that each had formed such loving new relations, and, Oh, how happy they would all be. The thought was glorious to them, yet they confessed to each

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other that there was a tinge of pain. The old clock upon the mantel struck off the passing hours, all unheeded or unheard by the brother-sister sweethearts. Finally, the father, startled between naps by the hum of conversation, feared there were burglars in the house, and proceeded to investigate. He discovered his children in the library as fond and loving as they were in years gone by, when they were preparing their school lessons in that same old room. His presence aroused them, and they were reminded of the hour. That was sufficient. The brother and sister retired to their rooms, while the father sank down in a large chair to dream over and over again the same old, old dreams in which the vision of a beautiful wife, son and daughter had filled the old home with light, warmth and happiness, years, long years, ago.

NORKOMA, THE PRINCE OF PEARLS

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NORKOMA, THE PRINCE OF PEARLS.

As suggested to Butler by LeBerte Marchand, the body of Wilkoma Olcott, or John Hayes, was given burial at Memphis. Marchand further suggested that, if possible, Butler should go to Memphis and attend the funeral, as a mark of respect for his friend, and, incidentally, that proof of death might be made, so as to probate the will of the deceased. Whatever else Marchand may have had in mind was not at the time made known, if, indeed, he had any other object in view. When Butler returned, he brought with him a photograph of the deceased, together with affidavits of the attending physicians as to the death of the man, Wilkoma Olcott, otherwise known as John Hayes. These were exhibited to LeBerte Marchand, resulting in the restoration of perfect quietude, and driving away all fears from the minds of the occupants of "The Cedars."

Once more the home of LeBerte Marchand was the scene of joy, peace and happiness. No more were the members of that happy family to bear the torturing fear of a possible future exposure of some hidden skeleton. The little mother could now face the world with a smile and a light heart. Not that she should have ever felt otherwise, for her conscience had always been clear, her heart clean, and her life

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pure. It had been no fault of hers if, in the providence of God, the knowledge of certain facts were withheld from her during all those years. She followed the light which providence had afforded her, and therefore felt the consciousness of having done right. Withal, the fears, the doubt had been an ever fruitful source of mind and soul torture. Those doubts and fears were now suddenly brushed away by the natural death of Wilkoma Olcott, henceforth rest, peace, joy. One thing more, however, the little woman desired, and which would greatly add to her joy. If Providence would now restore to her the son, her boy, she could ask nothing more. But the little woman resolved to try and content herself with the blessing she already enjoyed, dismissing the further thought from her mind forever, as she believed.

LeBerte Marchand was, to all appearances, as equally content and happy as were the other members of the household. True, his mind was equally relieved of the doubt and fear of the one possible family skeleton. Now, that both his daughter and son were each to marry and settle down in life, there was no further burden of soul. His life-long secret regarding the little locket had, to some extent, lost importance owing to the recent developments. Yet he would, for the sake of the old life, retain his secret and the little locket, safe from the knowledge of the world. It had been his custom for years to seek the privacy of his little room, and, with the locket in hand, dream over and over the old, old days. There was no necessity for violating this old custom, thought he, hence he would let matters rock along in the old way.

It was but a few days until the marriage of Edith and Butler should be solemnized, and Dorothy Rathbone was

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already at "The Cedars" to take part in the ceremonies as bridesmaid. The old home fairly sparkled with mirth, merriment and good cheer. Midst all the anxiety and joyful anticipations, Walter and Dorothy found occasion and opportunity for consultation and discussion upon matters more serious and problems more weighty, as they suggested. It was at this time when Walter was absorbed in a research for information relating to the conditions of trade between Latin-America and the United States, as compared with that of Europe.

"From the most recent statistics," said Walter, "I have ascertained that for the year 19—, the trade of Latin-America with Europe was of the value of \$669,000,000, while the trade with the United States was but \$306,000,000, or less than one-half that of Europe. Our country exported to Latin-America trade of the value of \$68,000,000, and imported from the same countries for the same period values of \$238,000,000, leaving a net balance of trade in favor of Latin-America of \$170,000,000. Is not that a deplorable condition of business affairs? Does this not show that we, of the United States, are mercilessly neglecting golden opportunities of trade with our next door neighbors? Neighbors of whom we are, by the policy of our government, the friend and protector against foreign invasion? Why was the Monroe Doctrine established? Was not one of its purposes, though perhaps concealed at the time, to protect and encourage our trade with Latin-America? Why will our people persist in going to Oriental countries for trade, where sooner or later the United States will become involved in international wars that will kill off our young men and create a pension list so large that it may engulf us beyond

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possible recovery? The doors of the Orient are rapidly closing against the trade of the United States, while Europe is stealthily fostering the trade of our American neighbors. Why can we not begin to realize the actual conditions existing in Latin-America which have permitted Europe to enjoy the trade of those nearby neighbors? Why do we not begin to realize that the world's greatest future developments and progress will be found in the great Southwest, Texas and Latin-America? Do we not see the building of the isthmian canal, the interoceanic railroads and pipelines, the international lines of railroads and steamships, the vast industries forcing themselves into Texas, Mexico, Central and South America? These countries are already taking the lead in development, and it means a future prosperity the like of which the world never before knew. Is it not time that the United States should take fewer chances of Eastern wars, and help build up the western world? It seems so natural that the trade of Latin-America should belong to the United States, that there is no excuse for the present unsatisfactory conditions, nor the apparent apathy upon the part of the American people."

"If, as you say," said Dorothy, "the lack of acquaintance with the existing conditions of the Latin countries is the cause, then certainly the remedy must be along educational lines, such as are contemplated by the projected Pan-American College of Commerce, is it not?"

"There is no question about it," replied Walter. "The results to be obtained by the method to be adopted by the college of commerce will prove more effective and speedy than would all the steamship and railroad lines that will

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be established between the United States and Latin-America within the present century."

While Walter and Dorothy were thus discussing the trade conditions of the Americas, they were interrupted by Edith, who reminded them that Mr. Butler and Mr. Walton had come to open and read the last will and testament of the late John Hayes, otherwise known as "The Prince of Pearls."

"Your presence is urgently requested. Please come," added Edith, then returned to her guests. When all had assembled in the spacious room, Mr. Walton stated that he had prepared the last will and testament of the late Wilkoma Olcott, and that the same had been executed according to the formalities required by law. That he would break the seal and make known the contents and provisions thereof in the presence of those assembled, according to the customs of the country, in matters of this character. Whereupon, the seal was broken and the document examined.

"Before publicly reading the document," said Mr. Walton, "I shall ask if there be any one present who desires first to examine the document?"

"With your permission," said LeBerte Marchand, "I should be pleased to inspect the document, not that I apprehend there are any irregularities as to form, however." Receiving the instrument from the hands of Mr. Walton, Marchand began searching for his spectacles, but failed to find them.

"I presume you left your glasses in your room, papa," suggested Edith, "I will bring them for you." Whereupon Edith went to the father's rooms and finding the glasses

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upon the old iron safe among other articles and papers, returned, saying:

"Here are your glasses, papa." Then going to her mother, unobserved by the father, said:

"I suppose this is yours, mother, as I found it lying upon the safe with father's glasses," handing to the mother at the same time, the little golden chain and locket which had, by accident, been left lying there by the father when he was suddenly called to hear the reading of the will. The mother gave a slight start at the first glance at the locket, then adjusting her glasses she observed the inscription upon the side, "Norma." Either by accident or by a deft and unobserved manipulation, the locket was opened and the mother gazed upon the picture therein contained, at the same time uttering a scream of surprise and fright, bewildering those present, all of whom sat looking at the mother with a transfixed gaze. With an effort the little woman composed herself in a measure, then straightened up as if nerving herself for a personal affray with a foe, and fixing her eyes steadily upon Edith, coldly said:

"How came you by this little locket?"

"I found it on papa's safe," replied Edith, excitedly.

"Husband, do you know how this locket came to be in your possession, or at least in your room?"

"Yes, wife, I know all about it. Why do you ask?"

"Because, this locket was my own. It contains the picture of my girlhood days. It was worn by my only child, my little Norkoma."

"My God, woman, are you speaking the truth?" said Marchand.

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"Yes, so help me God," replied the mother. "If you know all about this locket, then you possibly know all about my son. Oh, my God, tell me quick. Do you know?"

"If what you say is true, I do know about your son."

"Where is he, where is my son, for Heaven's sake tell me."

"There is your son! Walter Marchand is your son, if you speak the truth."

"You deceive me, he is your own son. Tell me, or I shall go mad."

"No, Walter Marchand is not the child of my own blood, but my adopted son. I tell you that, if what you have said be true, Walter is your own son."

"Then thank God, my only prayer has been answered, my only hope has been realized. I felt all these years that you, Walter, were the child of my own blood, else I could not have loved you as I did. Thank God, my cup of joy is filled, I am content."

"What does all this mean?" excitedly inquired Walter. "I am dumfounded, I do not understand. Father, you say I am not the child of your own blood. I have the right to demand of you an explanation. I have grown up in your family, believing I was your son, the brother of your daughter Edith. You must have had cause for this deception, this silence."

"Do not be harsh, my son," said the mother, "for now I must thank God that your young life fell into the hands of so good and noble a man as LeBerte Marchand. Be calm, and learn the story of your childhood days, then you will have cause to be thankful that LeBerte Marchand has lived."

"Edith, my child," said Marchand, "go into my room, and upon the iron safe, where you fond the little locket,

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you will also find a written document tied with a red tape. Bring it to me, please, for it is my story with relation to this matter. I prepared it years ago, so that in the event of my sudden taking off, my family would learn the true status of my son Walter." When Edith returned the father added:

"Here it is, Walter, read it for yourself."

Walter hastily read aloud the plainly written document which gave in detail the facts as to how and when the little boy "Norkoma" was rescued from the old negress at Memphis, and followed on down to the time when he returned from the college, a young man of whom his foster father was overproud. There, Marchand's story ended, and Walter looked around, first at one and then at another, finally saying: "It is incredible."

"Now, I understand the situation," said Butler. "You have all read the portion of the old man's written statement which I handed to Mr. Marchand, but which does not in special terms connect with Mr. Marchand's statement. That was not all of the old gentleman's story. There is a supplementary statement, made by Mr. Olcott, a couple of days afterwards. It is attached to the will for the purpose of identifying his wife and child, in case they were ever found. I was requested by him to not make the contents of his supplementary statement known until his wife or son be found, or until his death. Being now absolved, I ask Mr. Walton to read the supplementary statement."

Mr. Walton read aloud the statement last made by Olcott, to the surprise of both Mr. and Mrs. Marchand, proving almost beyond doubt that the little boy whom Marchand recovered from the old negress was no other than Walter Marchand, and the son of Norma Marchand's body.

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"Now, I have sent for the old negress who may be able to close the gap in the proof as to who Walter Marchand really is," said Butler. "You realize the fact that the old negress may have had a half dozen little white boys in her charge at different times after the war, and, if so, Walter Marchand may not be the son of Wilkoma Olcott."

"Oh, please, Mr. Butler, if there is any doubt about Walter being my son, for God's sake, do not, do not take him from me!"

"My dear Mrs. Marchand, there is no doubt. I will prove it. May I bring the old negress in here?" said Butler.

"Certainly, certainly, let her come in," said Marchand.

"Let me first tell you that the old negress was my father's slave, and during the war she was liberated, going direct to Memphis, where she lived until some years after the war closed, when she came back to our plantation. She lived with us until after I went off to college, where Walter and I first met. She then came here, and, by accident, she found me. I have been taking care of her since. I beg of you to show kindness to my old black mammy, so that we may get her full story."

When old Aunt Dinah was brought into the room, Butler explained to her the purpose for which she was there, and requested her to be careful and answer truthfully any question that might be asked her. Then handing to her the little locket and chain, asked:

"Did you ever see this little locket before, Aunt Dinah?"

After examining it carefully, she answered:

"Yessah, Marse Joe, I done seed that afoh."

"When and where did you see it, Auntie?"

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"Long time ago when I lived in Memphis. Dat b'long to my white baby, sho' as yo' live."

"What baby?"

"Koma, my white baby, 'Koma. I done tole you all 'bout dat, Marse Joe, what you axin' me agin fo'?"

"Because I want these friends of mine to know the truth. What became of the white baby?"

"I done tole you a white man kem and got him. He sed as how he was de uncle o' dat chile, and he giv' me twenty dollahs for de keepin', den he tooked de chile, locket an' all, away. Den I went back to Alabamy, to my ole Marse Butler's. Dat's de Gawd's blessed truf. Dat's what it is."

"Did you ever have any other white baby in your keeping while you lived in Memphis?"

"Naw sah, naw sah, dat's de onliest white baby what I evah did have. Dat's sho's you live, Marse Joe."

"That is all, Aunt Dinah, unless some one present desires to ask you a question."

"I will ask her a question, Mr. Butler," said Marchand.

"What was the little boy doing on the day the white man came and took him away?"

"Doin'? He was too little fer to do anything, I reckon," said the negress.

"Did he ever try to sell newspapers?"

"Oh, yassah, yassah, I done tried to larn him to sell papahs, 'kase I wuz too po' fer to let him set 'round doin' nuffin. Yassah, he done sole a few papahs, but he wasn't big 'nuff to do much of anyt'ing."

"That is all, I have no more questions," said Marchand, and Aunt Dinah was dismissed. Then Butler turned to Walter and said:

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"You know now where you heard those old nursery negro melodies. Aunt Dinah was your old black mammy, as well as my own."

"I am now convinced beyond all doubt, that Walter is of the flesh and blood of my wife, Norma," said LeBerte Marchand, "although I had never dreamed such to have been possible. In the early days, I feared that he would be discovered and taken away from me, so I guarded my knowledge of the matter as with the secrecy of the grave. So did I love my adopted son, so jealous for his every advantage that life could afford him was I, that I dared not breathe my secret even to my present wife nor my children. I had resolved to carry my secret with me to the grave if necessary, rather than to see my son torn from my bosom. Then later, when I became aware of the passion of love existing between my son and daughter, my heart bled for them, but there was no remedy. Had they known, they would have cursed my gray hairs to the grave. The people could not have understood, and both my wife and I would have gone to our graves in sorrow. Thank God that it has all ended so beautifully, by each of our children finally choosing life companions who will make their lives most happy."

"Father, foregive me," said Walter, for my cruel words a moment ago. I did not then understand. I want to thank you for all you have done for me, and, so long as I live, I shall love you more and more, for I shall never be able to repay the debt of gratitude I owe. And my dear little mother, God bless you, I have loved you so much—oh, I have loved you more than I could have loved any one who was not my real mother. Often my heart told me that you were my own sweet mother. But there, be happy now, and I promise

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you I will continue to love you only as a true son can love his mother. And, my darling sister, what can I say to you but words of love. We have been companions and sweet-hearts from our childhood days, and—”

“Walter, Edith,” said the father, directing their attention to both Butler and Dorothy, who were each slowly drifting with bowed heads and in silence into the library.

“Don’t, brother. Say no more at present. It no doubt causes an unpleasantness—”

“Yes, yes, I forgot,” interjected Walter, interpreting Edith’s mind. Then quickly overtaking Butler and Dorothy, begged them to return, which they did, when Walter continued:

“Now, sir, my friend Butler, let me place your hand in that of your wife, the truest, best, dearest little sister in all the world, and who will be as good a wife as she is a sister.”

“Walter,” said Butler, “you are generous, but I shall insist that Edith’s desires shall be consulted in this matter.”

“Old boy, I know how you love my sister, and I know she loves you. Let her speak.”

Then Edith, taking Butler’s hand in both her own, said, with eyes filled with tears of joy:

“Like one of old, I say: ‘Whither thou goest, shall I go, and where thou diest shall I die. Thy God shall be my God, and thy people shall be my people.’”

“God bless you, my little angel, all the days of my life will I strive to be worthy of so good, so pure, so gentle and loving a wife, as I know you shall be,” said Butler in broken voice.

“Well, folks, no one has the best of me,” said Walter, as

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he held Dorothy's hand. "Let us cheer up, for Dorothy and I have just agreed to make the affair a double wedding."

"God bless you, my children, you don't know how happy it makes my poor old heart. I know mother shares my happiness," said the father.

In a few minutes quiet was restored, and the will was read, which provided that for the legal services rendered by Walter Marchand, and for the brotherly services rendered by Butler, each were bequeathed one-tenth of the estate. In the event the wife, Norma Olcott, was found and unmarried, the balance of the estate should go to her, for herself and son. But, if married and in needy circumstances, one-half of the remainder should go to her, and the other half to the son, Norkoma Olcott. Otherwise, the remainder was wholly bequeathed to the son. But in the event that neither wife nor son be found, the entire remainder should go to Joseph Butler and Walter Marchand, to be employed by them for charitable or individual purposes, as they might deem proper.

"According to the unmistakable evidence," said Butler, Walter Marchand is no other person than Norkoma Olcott, and the sole and only heir to the fortune, as well as to the title, the 'Prince of Pearls.'"

"All hail, the 'Prince of Pearls,'" joyously exclaimed Dorothy.

THE END.

AUTHOR'S NOTE—To create a widespread interest in the projected Pan-American College of Commerce, is one of the objects of this book. Those who have become interested are kindly requested to read the Appendix.

APPENDIX

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The idea of the projected Pan-American College of Commerce (sometimes called Pan-American Trades College) was conceived and originated by the author of this book. The absolute necessity of some method or means by which the United States may bring about a better trade condition with Latin-America becomes more and more apparent every year. The very fact that, for the year 1904, the trade of the United States with Latin-America was \$63,000,000, less than one-half of Europe's trade with the same countries, is a condition that speaks volumes. Again, the exports from the United States to Latin-America for the same year were less than the imports to those countries by \$170,000,000, leaving a net balance of trade in favor of Latin-America by just that sum, as against the United States. This condition needs no comment.

On May 6th, 1905, a special committee, reporting to the Texas Legislature, upon the conditions and trade relations of the United States and Latin-America, in part, said:

"The greatest field of trade in the world lies at the very doors of the United States, while the American merchant and exporter 'flies to distant climes' for an undiscovered field. A few examples may serve to illustrate our trade conditions with Latin-America, as compared with European countries:

"ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

"In 1890, the imports of the Argentine Republic from five foreign countries were as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Great Britain | \$57,000,000 |
| France | 19,000,000 |
| Belgium | 10,000,000 |
| Germany | 12,000,000 |
| United States | 4,000,000 |

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"The trade of the United States with Argentine in 1890 was no greater than it was twenty years prior.

"HONDURAS.

"The importations from the United States for the year 1892 were \$512,000. Exports to the United States for the same year were \$963,000; the balance of trade in favor of Honduras being \$451,000.

"NICARAGUA.

"The imports into this country for 1890 from two foreign countries were:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| England | \$1,324,000 |
| United States | 811,000 |

"MEXICO.

"For the year 1898, Mexico exported into the United States commerce of the value of \$94,974,616, while the value of her imports from the United States for the same year was \$21,490,604.

"Many illustrations could be given to show the very unsatisfactory commercial relations existing between the United States and our Latin-American neighbors. The commerce of these countries should have been ours, long ago.

"BARRIER TO OUR TRADE.

"The great barrier is a lack of knowledge by the American exporter as to the wants, needs, customs, habits, languages and usages of the Latin-American, and a lack of acquaintance with the people of those countries. Some practical suggestions are to be found in a letter written by a merchant in Honduras to the Bureau of American Republics. An extract therefrom reads as follows:

"The failure of the merchants of the United States to capture the Latin-American trade is due to the fact that they do not send out reliable agents who can speak the language and who are acquainted with the habits, tastes, wants and needs of the people. English and German houses avail themselves of the services of such men, and the consequence is, they get the business. The great requisites for such a man are, ability to speak and write the Spanish language; to know the wants, needs, tastes and customs of the people; to have a knowledge of the patterns and classes of goods suited to the various markets here. I have never heard of an

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American agent visiting this country who was capable. All whom I have personally met were in entire ignorance of the needs and wants of the people.'

"UNITED STATES CONSUL WOOD.

"United States Consul Wood, in Honduras, in a report to the United States, among other things, says:

" 'American exporters should make a careful study of these countries. German and English exporters are, as a rule, more painstaking in the selection of their representatives, securing only those who are acquainted with the peoples of these countries, and who speak the languages, know the habits, wants, usages and customs, and so win a share of the trade where American goods are placed to a far greater advantage.'

"THE REMEDY.

"If the United States shall provide some means whereby the younger generations of the countries interested may come together, intermingle, and become better acquainted with each other, as well as to become co-educated, learn the languages, habits, usages and needs of the various peoples, it will bring about the much to be desired trade conditions more rapidly than any other conceivable plan.

"AMERICA'S OPPORTUNITY.

"As stated in the resolution, the United States is rapidly becoming a world-power. Her rightful position upon the Western Hemisphere should be, the 'Master of Commerce.' Her governmental activities for years past have tended along the lines of commerce. With Latin-American willing and anxious to enter upon more friendly trade relations, affords, we believe, America's opportunity to quickly achieve her richly deserved commercial supremacy in the Western World, *by promulgating and fostering a Pan-American College of Commerce, as herein suggested.*

"A TEXAS COMMISSION.

"We suggest that a Commission be duly appointed by the Texas Legislature, consisting of ten members, to be supplemented at any time by the Governor, as may be required. We further suggest and recommend that such Commission, patriotic in spirit, conduct the promulgation of the projected Pan-American College of Commerce in such manner as its best judgment shall direct."

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The report of the Legislative Committee was unanimously adopted, and the following named persons were duly appointed, as the Texas Commissioners for the Pan-American College of Commerce:

SENATORS.

George B. Griggs.....Houston
John G. Willacy.....Corpus Christi
Marshall Hicks.....San Antonio
A. B. Davidson.....Cuero
W. A. Hanger.....Fort Worth

REPRESENTATIVES.

John F. Onion.....San Antonio
W. L. Blanton.....Gainesville
J. L. Peeler.....Austin
E. F. Harris.....Galveston
J. T. Canales.....Brownsville

INDORSEMENTS.

Hon. J. H. Metcalf, Secretary Department Commerce and Labor, Washington, D. C., says:

"I have no doubt that a trade school, established on the lines set forth in the report of the committee, would be of incalculable value in promoting the commercial, as well as the fraternal relations, with our sister Republics.

"The Legislature of Texas is to be commended for taking the initiative in this movement. * * * The movement for establishing a Pan-American College of Commerce is timely, and should receive the earnest support of the whole people."

Dr. H. S. Lehr, of Ohio, one of the foremost educators in the United States, says:

"There is much need for an institution such as your Commission is promulgating. It would bring about a freedom of intercourse between the American Republics, thereby encouraging trade and development. It would have a tendency to bring about the use of a common language, which would be the English language, a com-



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mon system of weights and measures, a common currency, common customs, and, in time, a common literature. In fact, the many advantages of such an institution cannot now be enumerated, but will grow as the school advances, and the countries interested develop. The possibilities of such an institution are so great that one must stand in awe at its future possibilities and grandeur, as it looms up in imagination."

St. Louis Globe-Democrat, April 29, 1905:

"By and through the methods of a Pan-American College of Commerce, the United States could quickly double or triple its commerce with Latin-America, and establish new ties to bind all those countries with us. The project is excellent, and is worthy the attention of the United States."

American Exporter, June 29, 1905:

"Should this great college project be consummated, it will quickly become the Mecca for the young merchants of the Western World, who wish to become schooled in the needs of international trade on the American Continent."

Further comment is deemed unnecessary, here. The Texas Commission desires the co-operation of every citizen of all the Americas in this great work. In the United States, we wish to press upon Congress the importance of this project, to the end that our National government shall take the necessary steps to insure its early consummation. Upon behalf of the Texas Commission, I thank those good citizens of our country who have interested themselves in this project. I shall be pleased to receive communications from all who indorse the ideas herein presented.

Respectfully,

GEO. B. GRIGGS,
President Texas Commission, Houston, Texas.



